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in a time of fear


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From the publisher

Peter W. Marty

Orange swaddling cloths

The public elementary school across the street from our church is the poorest in the city. Chronic absences among students are common given uneven home lives, regular sickness, and parents wrestling with poverty.

Dana is the woman on our church staff whose entire job is focused on that school. She runs programs that benefit school families, one of which is a food pantry offering everything from social worker services to free haircuts. Dana met a woman shopping there named Aleesha.

Aleesha is a petite 25-year-old with a child in kindergarten. As she was carefully perusing the food shelves to select certain items, Dana learned that Aleesha had taken the bus from a hospital 20 minutes away. She wasn't looking to bring back anything more than was convenient to carry.

"What was she doing in *that* hospital anyway," I asked Dana, "if her oldest kid goes to this school and we have a hospital just ten blocks away?"

It turns out that six days earlier, Aleesha was driving to visit her sick brother in a town across the Mississippi River. Driving on a suspended license (from having no insurance) was a big mistake, which she now regrets. When a police officer pulled her over for a routine traffic stop, he arrested her, impounded her van, and took her to jail. She tried to convince her jailers that she was pregnant and now enduring labor pains. But no one believed her. A corrections officer finally put her in a squad car that headed for

the hospital. On the way, Aleesha pulled down her orange jumpsuit to give birth to a baby boy in the back seat.

When Aleesha showed up at the food pantry, her six-day-old preemie was back in the neonatal unit. Her husband, who had walked two and a half hours with their three kids to join her at the hospital, was living temporarily in a room there, thanks to the kindness of a hospital administrator.

Upon leaving the food pantry, Aleesha had two requests. First, would Dana, who offered to drive her back to the hospital, be willing to stop at the payday loan office so she could cash a check. Second, would Dana be willing to stop at the Family Dollar store so she could purchase some undergarments. Both were easy requests to honor, though the pain of observing the absurd fees of the check-cashing endeavor was difficult. And buying underwear at a Dollar store is hard to do with dignity.

Aleesha chattered in the car. Dana listened, as she does so well. Aleesha poured out her anguish. She told of contemplating adoption for her newborn, but then changing her mind. "I just couldn't do it. Kids always want to locate their biological parents. What would I say to him if he came back to me someday and asked why I didn't love him as much as his sisters and brother?"

The sadness of children of poverty giving birth to other children of poverty is profound. Easy solutions do not exist. But when my ears hear the Christmas story this year, my heart is going straight to that swaddling cloth of an orange jumpsuit, and that manger as cold as the backseat of a squad car.

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December 21, 2016 Vol. 133, No. 26

IN THIS Issue

- 6 Letters**
Liars
- 7 Resisting the spell**
The Editors: Toward a truthful politics
- 8 CenturyMarks**
Voices of 2016
- 10 Pregnant with hope**
Carol Howard Merritt: Bearing God in Advent
- 11 Planting garlic**
Terra Brockman: Notes from the farm
- 22 Welcome to Missoula**
Amy Frykholm: Resettling refugees in a time of fear
- 26 A Bible for everyone?**
John Fea: Fifty years of the *Good News* translation
- 30 I choose, therefore I am**
Robert Westbrook: Lives of the existentialists

On the cover: A refugee family and friends after a service at the Missoula Alliance Church.
Photo © Jeremy Lurgio.

NEWS

- 14** Seminary returns rare manuscript to Greek Orthodox;
FBI report shows surge in anti-Muslim attacks, rise in hate crimes;
The rise and fall (and rise?) of Christian nationalism

IN REVIEW

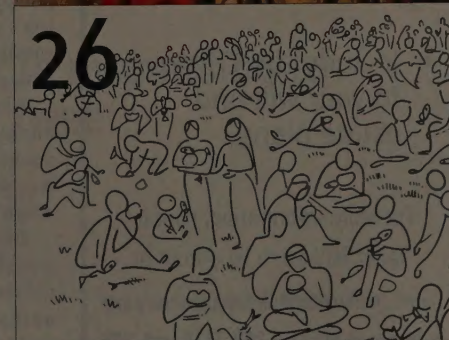
- 36 Books**
Anthony B. Robinson: *Strangers in Their Own Land*, by Arlie Russell Hochschild
Chris Herlinger: *Youngblood*, by Matt Gallagher; *War Is Beautiful*, by David Shields
Elizabeth Palmer: *Here I Am*, by Jonathan Safran Foer
Karen Saupe: *Reading and Writing Cancer*, by Susan Gubar
- 44 Media**
Beth Felker Jones: *Wizards in New York*
- 47 Art**
Lil Copan: *Angel of Undevastation* and *Black*, by Paul Solovyev (aka 0x17)

COLUMNS

- 3 From the publisher**
Peter W. Marty: Orange swaddling cloths
- 20, 21 Living by the Word**
Robert Saler
- 35 Faith Matters**
Stephanie Paulsell: Awake and watching
- 45 Notes from the Global Church**
Philip Jenkins: Jakarta's Christian governor

POETRY

- 12 Brian Doyle:** Such signal muscularity
- 28 Yehiel Poupko:** So Job died old and full of days
- 32 Warren L. Molton:** Read THE COW IS NOW said the child
- 33 Abigail Carroll:** Make me plow blade



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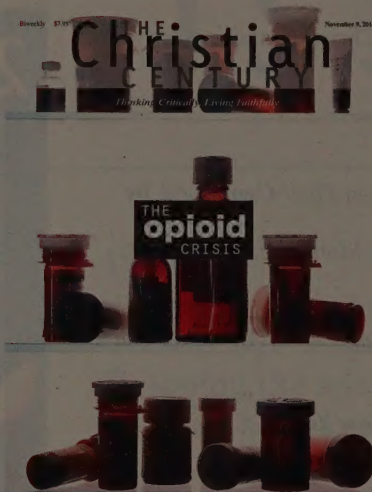
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LETTERS

Liars



Compelling theology . . .

I'm impressed with how Sarah Coakley's theology is grounded in prayer and embraces science ("Theology through prayer," Nov. 23). I also like how she puts her theology to work directly in people's lives through her work with prisoners. Thanks for this compelling introduction to her work.

*Michael Mandsager
christiancentury.org comment*

Luther's work . . .

I'm surprised the CHRISTIAN CENTURY Editors did not catch the error in "Landmark Luther exhibits explore his technological and theological legacy" (Nov. 9), in which David Gibson wrote: "There are [Luther's] translations of the Bible from Latin into the German of the day." As we all know, Luther translated from the original Greek and Hebrew, not Latin.

*Robert Roser
Stafford, Va.*

Brazil's oligarchy . . .

The article on the ousting of Brazil's president ("A coalition to impeach," by Cláudio Carvalhaes and Raimundo Barreto, Nov. 9) was a good, but thoroughly sad, read for me. It reports on what is almost a mirror of what's happening in the United States and in Britain: the oligarchy on the march, and with too many power-entranced evangelicals going along for the dance.

In Brazil, or anywhere for that matter, the lessons of history are that when frightened and unsure, people will always lean toward some form of fascism, and the oligarchy loves it.

*Tom Eggebeen
christiancentury.org comment*

I agree wholeheartedly with the need for honesty and telling the truth; I would even go further and suggest that silence before God allows God to tell us the truth about ourselves. I was dismayed, however, by Peter Marty's "The truth about lies" (Nov. 9), which began by stating that "professional truth-seekers are having a rough time with Donald Trump."

I've always known that CHRISTIAN CENTURY is a liberal or progressive magazine, but I didn't let that deter me from subscribing year after year. The line in the lead paragraph calling out Trump as a liar who "lies about even his own lies" got my attention quickly. Hillary Clinton's name could just as well have been substituted for Trump's and been even closer to the truth.

I am a Republican United Methodist minister who sided with Trump's economics when I don't believe Clinton has any, short of socialism, if she even thinks about it.

Both of them could have been mentioned if you wanted to use the presidential race as an example of lies. I am offended that you chose to pick Trump alone.

*Mary Beth Packard
Bartow, Fla.*

December 21, 2016

Resisting the spell

President-elect Donald Trump has shown himself highly skilled at using social media to keep the nation talking about himself, with little regard for how many people he offends, norms he violates, or untruths he disseminates. He has used his Twitter account to lash out at the cast of *Hamilton* for daring to advise him, and he has declared (with no basis in fact) that millions of Clinton votes were counted fraudulently.

The danger for critics who respond to Trump tweet by tweet is that they become so consumed with taking offense that they lose focus on more substantive issues and lose the energy to engage in more helpful forms of response over the long haul. In her 1967 essay "Truth and Politics," Hannah Arendt asked, "Is not impotent truth just as despicable as power that gives no heed to truth?" The question of the moment is how to make truth potent.

Potent responses to the issues of governance likely to be raised in the months ahead include:

- Protecting constitutional rights and being alert to occasions when freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion are in jeopardy.
- Defending stewardship of the environment. Almost all scientists agree that abandoning limits on greenhouse gas emissions and watering down environmental regulations will imperil the planet and its most vulnerable citizens.
- Encouraging policies that narrow income inequalities and provide genuine economic opportunity to all workers—and that don't pit one segment against another.
- Keeping an eye on where the money goes. As a businessman with financial dealings around the globe, Trump needs to distance himself firmly from his own business operations so as to avoid directly enriching himself in office and adjusting policies to serve his interests.
- Speaking up alongside immigrants and their families, those who are targets of hate crimes, and all those whose voices are rarely heard by decision makers.
- Building up diverse coalitions that work to meet the needs of people at the local level, thereby strengthening the basis for more truthful political discourse.

Arendt observed that image-producing politicians try to create an alternative reality with which to deceive or manipulate the public. This fictive alternative reality has to be countered, she said, by people "who have managed to escape its spell and insist on talking about facts or events that do not fit the image." A potent response comes, in other words, from those who know the lived realities of their neighbors and communities.

There is a danger in responding to Trump tweet by tweet.

VOICES of 2016

Sources: *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Common Dreams*, *Reuters*, *Daily Mail*, *Atlantic*, *Politico*, *Bloomberg*, *Baltimore Sun*, *NPR*, *Utne*, *CNN*

"There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology."

—**Pope Francis's** encyclical *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home*

"Does Congress listen to the military-industrial complex [which] has never seen a war that [it] didn't like? Or do we listen to the people of this country who are hurting?"

—Presidential candidate **Bernie Sanders**, at a campaign stop in New Hampshire

"Our founders who envisioned a fair, bipartisan process must be rolling in their graves."

—Senate minority leader **Harry Reid**, responding to the Republican refusal to consider President Obama's nominee to replace Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court

"We have to understand that an attack on one faith is an attack on all our faiths."

—**President Obama**, speaking at a mosque outside of Baltimore in the wake of increased hostile actions against Muslims

"What makes an act truly patriotic and not just lip service is when it involves personal risk or sacrifice."

—**Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**, defending Colin Kaepernick, quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, who takes a knee during the national anthem to protest racial injustice

"I am not scared of Boko Haram—they are not my God."

—**Amina Ali**, one of 219 Nigerian girls abducted by the Nigerian terrorist group in 2014, after she and her four-month-old daughter were rescued last May

"It is no secret that people of color are disproportionate victims of this type of scrutiny."

—Supreme Court justice **Sonia Sotomayor**, writing a dissent to a case in which the court defended the search of a drug defendant that the state admitted was illegal

"Get a backbone—do your job."

—**Mary Salas**, mayor of Chula Vista, California, calling on Congress to enact stricter gun regulation laws



"The system has crashed—even the atheists are praying!"



“If fighting for women’s health care and paid family leave and equal pay is playing the woman card, then deal me in.”

—**Hillary Clinton**, responding to criticism on the campaign trail that she was “playing the woman card”

“I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves. And I watch my daughters, two beautiful, intelligent, black young women playing with their dogs on the White House lawn.”

—**Michelle Obama**, speaking at the Democratic National Convention

“While the country’s shifting racial dynamics alone are certainly a source of apprehension for many white Americans, it is the disappearance of white Christian America that is driving their strong, sometimes apocalyptic reactions.”

—**Robert P. Jones**, author of *The End of White Christian America*

“Water is life.” “You can’t drink oil.”

—Chants at the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline, which the Standing Rock Sioux and their supporters claim could foul their drinking water and defile sacred sites

“We will give him a family and he will be our brother.”

—**Alex**, a six-year-old boy from New York, who wrote a letter to President Obama offering to provide a home for Omran Daqneesh, a Syrian boy who was injured in a bombing in Syria

“Something we’re not very good at in American culture is standing with pain, letting it be . . .

If you don’t deal with it, it doesn’t go away, it just comes out in other ways.”

—**Krista Tippett**, host of *On Being*, on angry populism in contemporary politics

“Post-truth”

—*Oxford English Dictionary*’s choice for Word of the Year, used in reference to circumstances in which emotional appeal takes priority over factual accuracy. Its usage spiked around the Brexit vote and the U.S. election.

“For those who loved him, he was the greatest. For those who hated him, there was no one worse.”

—Cuban **Graciela Martinez** on the death of Fidel Castro

“Obama radiates an ethos of integrity, humanity, good manners and elegance that I’m beginning to miss, and that I suspect we will all miss a bit.”

—Columnist **David Brooks**



Pregnant with hope

by Carol Howard Merritt

THE FIRST parish I served was in southern Louisiana. The denomination considered our congregation a “maintenance church.” Basically, it was waiting until the doors closed. Standing in front of the communion table, I felt like a very young woman. I am short, and I swam in my preaching robe and the tassels on the end of my stole dragged on the ground.

The area was stringently Roman Catholic. When I wore my clergy collar, people looked at me with visceral disgust. I once heard someone say, “Look at her. She thinks she’s a priest.”

I struggled, yet somehow the tiny church grew. For the first time in decades, the service filled with the sounds of children singing, talking, and disrupting my sermon. It was wonderful.

After a couple of years, I became pregnant and was terrified to tell the congregation. I, personally, had never seen a pregnant pastor. I had only read about one in a John Irving novel.

During Advent we turned to Mary’s story. She was a poor young woman who found herself pregnant. A messenger came and gave her two important pieces of information: she would bear the son of God, and her cousin Elizabeth was also pregnant, even though she was too old to be giving birth. Nothing was too wonderful for God. Mary responded, “Let it be done according to your word.”

Meister Eckhart, a medieval philosopher and mystic, saw Mary’s assent as a crucial moment. Eckhart wrote that we flow out of God our Creator. God is perpetually creating us; we are living in the mind of God and always being stretched and formed and molded. Mary gives spiritual birth to God, and now God is eternally borne. Every good soul that longs

for God bears God and gives birth to God.

I thought about Eckhart’s words as the months went on and my stomach stretched. Then I experienced a moment that forever changed my view of myself as a Christian and of God and salvation. I was in my third trimester, repeating the ancient words of institution during com-

hard. I could barely contain my laughter as I continued: “Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the saving death of our risen Lord, until he comes.” I stood there breathing deeply while this great and wonderful pain stretched me and transformed me, and with each jolt, a tremendous sense of creative power flooded me.

As I held up the communion cup, the baby inside me began to play soccer with my internal organs.

munion, when my belly began shifting around with those smooth oceanic movements. I looked down and even under that giant black robe I could see it moving, transforming into those alien shapes. My baby was just waking up and stretching. I smiled and thought, Oh no. Not now. Please, go back to sleep!

I continued to look down, but this time my eyes searched for the lines in my prayer book, and I began reading the liturgy. I was afraid that I would become so distracted that I would lose my way if I tried to say the words from memory, and so I lifted up the cup and resumed. “This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

The movement was no longer a gentle rolling. I felt jabs, right under my rib cage. As I held the cup up, I gasped as the baby began to play soccer with my internal organs. My eyes widened, and I almost spilled the wine as she kicked me,

Suddenly, this thought of Jesus coming again, which had always filled me with anxiety and fear, gave me hope. In that moment, as I spoke of Advent dreams—with Jesus coming again, my belly stretched—and broke the bread and poured the wine, I was filled with joy and longing instead of fear or vengeance. The yearning was deeper than what I’d felt growing up as a child and waiting for Christmas, because it encompassed the pain and sorrows as well as the anticipation, like moving from the taste of a cloying soda to the complex bitterness and sweetness of a fine wine.

The deep yearning was emotional, but

Carol Howard Merritt is author of Tribal Church.

This article is excerpted from her book Healing Spiritual Wounds: Reconnecting with a Loving God after Experiencing a Hurtful Church. © 2017 by Carol Howard Merritt. Published by HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, and used by permission.

it was physical too. I was a pregnant host at that table, and hope came alive in my very marrow as I felt a full-bodied longing. My muscles and bones adjusted in anticipation for the new life that was to come.

I felt at home for the first time in my body and behind that table, as I also understood the longing for Christ to be among us. I understood that it was a hope for the world as it ought to be—one that lifted the lowly and filled the hungry. I knew that just as I longed to provide for the child forming inside of me, God longed to provide for me.

Jesus wasn't going to arrive on a mushroom cloud with a double-edged sword coming out of his mouth in a



PHOTO © TRAMONTANA/THINKSTOCK

kick-ass move of final vengeance. Christ would not appear to bring death and destruction.

Christ returned here in our hope and work to make things on earth as they were in heaven. Christ appeared in our caring for the earth and for one another as we broke bread and drank wine together. Christ came in new life and fecundity. He came again as we served the world, striving to make the earth into the dream of God.

As I delivered the bread and the wine to the congregation, I remembered Mary and those mysterious words of Eckhart. I was blessed. I was pregnant with hope and bursting with new life. And I was bearing God. CC

Notes from the farm

Planting garlic

by Terra Brockman

HEADS BENT to the task at hand, my brother Henry and his farmhands, interns, and their families kneel in the soft soil and breathe in both the yeasty aromas rising up from the freshly tilled earth and the sweet woody smells descending from the forests surrounding the field. They also breathe in pungent garlic of many varieties, including German Extra Hardy, New York White, Korean Red Hot, Georgia Crystal, and Italian, German, French, and Russian Reds.

Garlic planting takes place at the cusp of the seasons—ideally, just after the warmth of Indian summer fades, and just before the snow flies. In central Illinois, that usually means the first

week of November, on a day when the soil is dry enough to work, and when all hands join in to get some 40,000 cloves of garlic into the ground. That day marks a caesura, a break in the normal rhythms of autumn on our diverse organic vegetable farm. Those rhythms usually include frenetic scrambling to get all the greens and roots harvested for the final markets even as each day gives us fewer minutes of sunlight than the one before.

This year there have been quite a few autumn rains, and one nearly disastrous flooding of the stream that runs along the fertile bottomland field, so Henry watches the weather each day, and checks the condition of the soil in the

part of the field set aside for next year's garlic patch. He does this by grabbing a harvest knife and jabbing three or four inches into the soil near the west side of the field where the sun has been hitting the longest. Then he picks up a handful of loosened earth and crumbles it through his fingers, feeling for stickiness.

When it falls apart easily, he moves to the center of the field and uses the knife to loosen more soil. He rubs a handful between his palms to see if it will form a ball that breaks apart easily. When it

Terra Brockman is the author of The Seasons on Henry's Farm (Agate Surrey). She farms with her brother and family in the Mackinaw River Valley of central Illinois.



USEFUL BEAUTY: These braids of soft-neck garlic are made to adorn kitchen walls.

does, he moves on to the east side of the field where the sun has just started to warm and dry the soil. He needs to be sure that working the moist soil here and elsewhere will not turn it into lumpy mud, which would then turn hard as rock

when dry, so he loosens yet another patch of earth with the knife, and makes it into a ball between his palms. Then he opens his palms. When the ball holds for just a moment before crumbling back to earth, Henry swipes his hands along his

Such signal muscularity

I got to listening to a calm burly young man this morning And when I asked him how he had achieved such a signal Muscularity he said quietly, well, carrying my kid brother. He's got some engineering issues and he wears out easily. I mean he can walk and run and everything but he doesn't Last real long. We developed signals early on. Real subtle. You wouldn't know unless you know. He doesn't like any Other people carrying him. He and I just fit is the best way To explain it. It was huge when I went to college. But I am Here partly because it's only an hour away. I get home lots. Usually twice a week. We go for a wander when I get home. There's a workout. Our record is more than half a mile, but Our goal is to do a solid mile before I graduate. My major? Engineering. I'm fascinated by how things that don't seem To work actually *do* work sometimes if you spend the time.

Brian Doyle

thighs with satisfaction and tells the farmhands and interns that today is the day for garlic planting.

The task is a choreographed team effort. First Henry rough-tills the beds to open them up and let more moisture escape. Meanwhile, the interns take the old pickup to the barn where garlic from the July harvest has been hanging to cure. Each strand of garlic consists of five bunches, and each bunch has 20 garlic plants. Each bunch is tied to another bunch so that they cascade down in vertical curtains of repeating garlic.

To begin the process, one person scrambles up the rickety ladder to cut a strand loose while another person waits below to gently lower the long, heavy strand of 100 garlic heads to the ground, and then into the bed of the waiting truck. When the truck bed is full, the workers drive the load of garlic down to the field. It's a bookend moment, equal and opposite to the moment when the garlic made its early summer trip from field to truck to rafters.

Soon we will break these 3,000 heads of garlic into some 40,000 individual cloves. And except for the very small cloves and any that may have gotten moldy over the humid summer, each clove will go into the ground to become a full head of garlic for next year's garlic crop.

Down in the field, Henry has been tilling each bed four inches deep. He attaches three clamps to the back of the tiller and lets it draw three straight lines over the smooth bed to guide us in our planting. As soon as the truck reaches the field, everyone grabs a strand and walks down a row, laying garlic stems every few feet so that one will always be within easy reach. We then fall to our knees, breaking apart bulbs and plunging each clove an inch down into the yielding earth, blunt end down and pointy end up.

Normally Henry waits for the first week of November so that a late October warm spell won't encourage the garlic to send up its green shoots only to be killed off by the winter cold. This year, however, we've had unseasonable warmth clear into November. Even as each day shortened, and the angle of the sun's rays fell lower in the southern sky,



PHOTO BY TERRY BRUNNEN

IN PROCESS: Garlic for late fall planting is hung in long strands from the rafters of the barn to cure.

the temperatures still rose to the 60s and 70s, creating cognitive dissonance.

While Henry would have liked to wait for cooler weather, another rain is sure to come before then, and our window of opportunity will close. So while the unseasonable warmth makes things a bit dicey for the garlic, it's a perfect

ing for a moment when some are cycling in and others cycling out.

Back in the present, minute after minute, hour after hour, the repetitive actions become automatic—reaching for a head, breaking it apart, placing each clove into the ground five inches from the previous one. As the afternoon sun

grunts of effort as someone breaks open yet another head. When my dad helped us plant garlic, he used a screwdriver to help his arthritic hands do the task, wedging the tool into the center of each head to force the cloves apart.

Then the sun begins to sink toward the lip of the hill at the western edge of the natural bowl that cradles our fields. Chill air rolls down the hillside, seeping into the soil and into our skin and bones. Layers of clothing slowly go back on as the team finishes the last tilled bed. The horizon suddenly gulps the sun, but a tangerine glow lingers in the sky as workers young and old make their way home, smelling of freshly tilled soil and freshly planted garlic.

With just the barest light still hanging in the sky, I look back to see the white confetti of garlic husks and stems scattered over the black earth. The first crop of the next season is in the ground, and to celebrate, the earth is decked out for the evening in black tuxedo and white tie.

CC

Garlic planting takes place at the cusp of the seasons, before the snow flies.

day to include the children of the two interns who have spent this season with us. Their presence accentuates the moment when one season meets another, as the last of this year's crops come out of the ground, and the first of next year's crops goes in. And if you squint slightly and look from a distance, you see that the generations present in the field—my brother in his fifties, his twenty- and thirtysomething interns, and their young children—are seasons too, meet-

warms the field and us, layers of clothing are shed—first jackets, then sweatshirts, then long-sleeved shirts—and suddenly we are in short sleeves for the last time this season.

In five-inch increments we move down one long bed and up the next, planting row after row, working our way through the different varieties of garlic. Most of the garlic heads are tightly wrapped with layers of paper skin strong as super glue. Every so often you hear a

CENTURY news

Seminary returns rare manuscript to Greek Orthodox

It was an “act of ecumenism” and a true gift—since the giver could not receive anything of equal value in return.

That’s how Archbishop Demetrios, head of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, and James Nieman, president of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, described the school’s decision to send a ninth-century New Testament manuscript back to the Greek monastery where it resided for centuries.

A scribe in Constantinople wrote the scriptures on sheepskin in minuscule cursive script. It is the oldest complete New Testament manuscript in that style. In the 12th century the codex joined a repository of more than 400 documents near Drama, Greece.

During the Balkan Wars, as the Ottoman Empire collapsed in the early 20th century, the area became contested. Soldiers raided Kosinitza Monastery in 1917 and took many of its precious manuscripts as spoils of war.

Levi Franklin Gruber, later president of one of LSTC’s predecessor institutions, purchased Codex 1424 from a European book dealer in 1920.

A year ago, a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, head of the global Orthodox churches, asked LSTC to consider returning the manuscript, which forms the basis of the official version of the New Testament used by the Greek Orthodox Church.

“It’s a cultural and religious lodestone for the Greek church,” Nieman said.

After receiving the letter from the Orthodox church, LSTC checked with attorneys and learned that Gruber’s purchase of Codex 1424 was permissible under international antiquities law then and now, Nieman said.

“We realized this was not a legal

question, it was a moral question,” Nieman said. “What do we do with something that is obviously ill-got gains? We didn’t gain it illegally, but somebody did. What do you do when you have the opportunity to set that right?”

Nieman checked with the school’s various stakeholders and found consensus supporting the return of the document—but also sadness.

Codex 1424 was “the crown jewel of our collection, far and away the most important and valuable document out of all of our rare books,” Nieman said. “It’s painful to do this.”

He noted that most gifts are actually a delayed exchange.

“A true gift is one that is costly to the person who is the giver and cannot possibly be reciprocated,” Nieman said.

At the ceremony LSTC hosted on November 15 to begin the manuscript’s journey from Chicago back to Kosinitza Monastery, Nieman spoke of giving this true gift to the Orthodox, “knowing the joy it brings you, our friends in Christ.”

Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, spoke of the history of Orthodox dialogues with the Lutheran World Federation.

“This is an important step toward reconciliation,” she said of returning the manuscript.

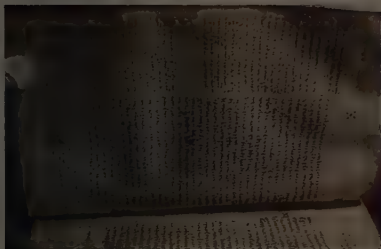
Demetrios crossed himself, bowed to kiss the book, and crossed himself again as he received the codex in its protective box.

The document has particular significance in that it features a different order to the New Testament, with the Pauline epis-



ACT OF REVERENCE: Archbishop Demetrios, head of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, bows to kiss a rare New Testament manuscript before receiving it from President James Nieman and the faculty of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago on November 15. Demetrios and Nieman traveled to Greece a few weeks later to return Codex 1424 to the monastery from which it was taken a century ago.

PHOTO BY TRILICIA KONING



COMMENTARY UPON COMMENTARY: *Codex 1424, a complete, ninth-century Greek New Testament manuscript, includes in its margins excerpts from church fathers such as John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa, added in later centuries by monks, as well as comments on those excerpts.*

ties coming after Revelation. It also omits some New Testament passages—and not by accident, Demetrios said. Notations in the text indicate that it was to be used in worship as a lectionary. The manuscript also includes commentary in the margins.

“This volume has comments from the fathers of the church, and comments on the comments,” he said. “This text offers to scholars the opportunity for a multi-level study.”

Codex 1424 is one of 60 complete Greek New Testament manuscripts extant and is included in the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament used by scholars. It is fully digitized and available through the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts at csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1424.

Demetrios noted that there are many other similar texts that were taken from their original place and are now in universities, museums, and private collections. He hopes they will follow LSTC’s example in voluntarily returning those documents.

“This constitutes an act of generosity of immense proportion,” he said. “‘Given back by free will’ is not an adequate description.”

He spoke of the return of the codex as a *d’var*, Hebrew for both “word” and “matter about which one speaks.”

“We are familiar with dialogues; they are productive, interesting,” Demetrios said. “They take plenty of time, patience, tolerance, doubts. But here is a plain, clear act of ecumenism.” —Celeste Kennel-Shank, the *CHRISTIAN CENTURY*

FBI report shows surge in anti-Muslim attacks, rise in hate crimes

ALTHOUGH Jewish people remain the most frequent victims in America of hate crimes based on religion, the number of incidents against Muslims surged in 2015, according to newly released data from the FBI.

Hate crimes against Muslims spiked 67 percent from 2014 to 2015, with 257 anti-Muslim incidents.

Robert McCaw, government affairs director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said the increase in anti-Muslim incidents accelerated after the election.

The FBI data show 664 incidents against Jewish people and institutions, motivated by anti-Semitism—a rise of about 9 percent.

“We are troubled that the FBI’s annual hate crimes report revealed an increase in the number of reported hate crimes—including an increase in the number of race-based crimes, crimes directed against Jews, and against the LGBT communities—and a significant increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes,” said Marvin D. Nathan, national chair of the Anti-Defamation League. “It is essential not to just assume a direct connection between these reported hate crimes and the inflammatory and divisive presidential election campaign. However, community climate matters and we have documented an unprecedented amount of bigotry and intolerance on the campaign trail.”

The FBI, which collects data on hate crimes leveled at victims because of their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, reported 5,818 incidents in 2015 overall, an increase of more than 6 percent from the previous year.

Of those crimes, about 20 percent were categorized as crimes rooted in religious bias. In the previous year, such crimes accounted for about 17 percent of the total hate crimes.

“This unprecedented increase in bigotry of all kinds must be repudiated in the strongest terms possible by all

our nation’s leaders, beginning with President-elect Donald Trump,” McCaw said.

The new FBI data confirm CAIR’s own report of an unprecedented number of incidents targeting mosques in 2015.

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, and other experts on bigotry noted that the FBI report, though it represents the best data available on hate crimes, underestimates the problem.

“Despite the extraordinary outreach and enforcement work by the Justice Department, it is disturbing that at least 85 police agencies in cities over 100,000 in population did not participate in this report—or affirmatively reported that they had zero hate crimes,” he said. “Data drives policy. . . . And the FBI’s annual report is the most important national snapshot of the hate crime problem in America.”

The largest group of hate crimes—nearly 60 percent—were motivated by racial or ethnic hatred, the report shows. Of those, more than half targeted black Americans.

[In one incident a week before the election, the building of the predominantly black Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, Mississippi, was burned and vandalized with “Vote Trump” spray painted on its outside wall. In the three weeks following the incident, donors contributed more than \$260,000 on a GoFundMe page set up with an initial goal of \$10,000.

The predominantly white First Baptist Church of Greenville, part of the Southern Baptist Convention, offered its chapel for the Hopewell congregation to hold services while it rebuilds, the Associated Press reported.

“They opened their doors to us to stay as long as we want,” Clarence Green, the bishop who serves Hopewell, told AP. “A wall of hatred is being torn down through the spirit of love.” —Lauren Markoe, Religion News Service

The rise and fall (and rise?) of Christian nationalism

Did the 2016 election portend the rise of Christian nationalism?

Only two years ago, the percentage of Americans who identified being a Christian with being an American had dropped precipitously from its post-September 11 hike.

Just one-third of Americans in 2014 said being Christian was very important to being a “true American.” That was down from the nearly half of Americans who felt that way in 2004, the General Social Survey found.

Two new studies shed light on the conditions that predict support for Christian nationalism and on how Donald Trump’s presidential run may have played a substantial role in its revival.

It didn’t matter if the fears articulated by Trump were real, said Clemson University researcher Andrew Whitehead, lead investigator in one study.

“Whether there was really a threat... he was trying to say there was a threat,” Whitehead said. “A certain section of America felt it really resonated.”

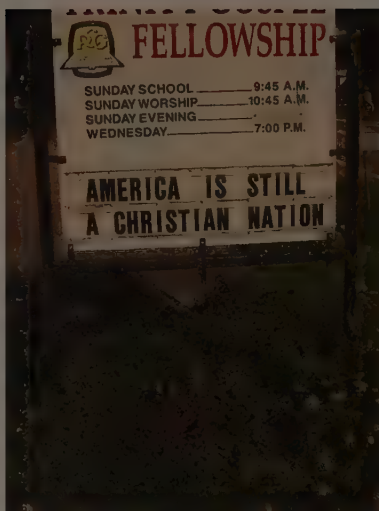
What is real are the consequences of defining America as a Christian nation, Whitehead said.

It can matter, Whitehead noted, in determining “who gets what, who is a part of, and who can take part” in American life.

The United States from its founding has dealt with the tension of seeing itself both as having a special covenantal relationship with God and as a home for the free exercise of religion.

For example, Trump’s rhetoric attacking Muslims and immigrants, and even proposing a religious test for immigration, has parallels in the 19th-century nativist movement deriding Catholic immigrants as a threat to the American way of life.

In their study, Whitehead and researcher Christopher Scheitle of West Virginia University analyzed more than 3,000 responses to questions on the qualities of being an American and of patri-



RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: A church sign in Jackson, Mississippi, declares that “America is still a Christian nation.” Recent studies have investigated the relationship between Christian nationalism and political events in the past 20 years.

otism from the 1996, 2004, and 2014 General Social Surveys.

They presented their findings at the recent joint annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association in Atlanta.

The ties between religion and nationalism can change dramatically in different time periods:

- In 1996, some 38 percent of respondents said being a Christian was very important to being an American.
- In 2004 nearly half, or 48 percent, of Americans, attributed the same significance to being a Christian.
- In 2014, a period of relative calm, the percentage dropped to one-third.

The importance of other markers of being American—being able to speak English and being born in the United States—also rose from 1996 to 2004, but reverted back to 1996 levels in 2014.

In a separate study, researchers examining varieties of American popular nationalism with data from the 2004 General Social Survey found that individuals who believed being a Christian was very important to being a true American were more likely to be what

they termed ardent or restrictive nationalists. Respondents in both of those groups also were more likely to say immigrants increase crime rates and take jobs from Americans.

“Disagreement about the importance of Christianity as a criterion of national membership is a central axis of division,” researchers from Harvard University and New York University reported in the current issue of the *American Sociological Review*.

So how did we go from the relative trust of 2014 to having a substantial part of the electorate receptive to anti-immigrant and anti-Islam appeals in 2016?

Fear appears to be one major reason. This could be attributed in part to recent terrorist events, such as the bombings in Brussels and Paris and the tensions in many European nations over waves of refugees fleeing violence in nations such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

But many signs also point to the president-elect, researchers indicate. When religious groups feel directly threatened, there can be an inclination to close ranks against outsiders, research has found.

In a climate of fear, political appeals “based on populist rhetoric coupled with nativist and racist claims” may be successful, researchers in the Harvard study suggested.

“Trump’s campaign has used a particular vision of the nation that emphasizes the superiority of the American people, the moral corruption of elites, and dire threats posed by immigrants and ethnic, racial, and religious minorities,” they wrote.

The consequences of a renewed Christian nationalism may be considerable.

A great deal of research finds that limits on religious freedom, both legal and social, can lead to a downward cycle of violence and distrust.

The apparent revival of Christian nationalism, the research suggests, appears to have brought the nation to another critical crossroad in defining what it means to be an American. —David Briggs, theARDA.com

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German Protestant church renounces mission aiming to convert Jewish people

Germany's main Protestant church mostly gave up efforts to convert Jews in the decades following the Holocaust, and closing that chapter should have been a formality.

But the Evangelical Church in Germany, or EKD, made up of 20 regional Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches, did not officially abandon the Judenmission, or mission to the Jews. And small groups of evangelicals in a few member churches have long opposed an official statement against conversion, despite calls from Jewish groups to issue one.

Now the 23-million-member EKD has officially renounced its mission to convert Jews to Christianity. At its annual meeting in November in Magdeburg, a resolution passed unanimously saying that Christians "are not called to show Israel the path to God and his salvation."

Since God never renounced the covenant with the Jewish people, they do not need to embrace the new Christian covenant to be saved, the resolution said.

"All efforts to convert Jews contradict our commitment to the faithfulness of God and the election of Israel," the resolution read. That Christians see Jesus as their savior and Jews don't is "a fact we leave up to God," it said.

Josef Schuster, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, welcomed the resolution, which his group had been urging the EKD to pass for several years: "This clear renunciation of the Mission to the Jews means very much for the Jewish community. With it, the EKD recognizes the suffering that the forced conversion of many Jews over the centuries has caused."

The EKD has worked for the past decade preparing for events to commemorate the Reformation's 500th anniversary.

Although Martin Luther initially expressed concern for the plight of Jews in medieval Europe and hoped to bring them into the Christian fold, Luther changed tack later in life and in a treatise titled "On the Jews and Their Lies" urged his follow-

ers to burn down Jews' homes and synagogues and confiscate their money.

The move to renounce the Judenmission was part of the EKD's drive to deal with this strain of anti-Semitism in its history so that the Reformation anniversary events could focus on Luther's other legacies.

The EKD last year denounced the "undisguised hatred of Jews" in Luther's writings and acknowledged that his anti-Semitism had inspired the Nazis centuries later.

In fact, the EKD broke with traditional theological anti-Semitism in 1950 by declaring that God's covenant with the Jews was still valid. But it wasn't until the 1990s that most member churches came out clearly against evangelization efforts.

The EKD wasn't alone in changing its approach slowly. The Roman Catholic Church renounced its theological anti-Semitism in 1965 with the pioneering document *Nostra aetate* at the Second Vatican Council. It took another 50 years before the Vatican issued a clear statement last December that it "neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews."

In Germany, internal debates leading up to the recent resolution focused on how clear the renunciation of the Judenmission should be. The final text denounced efforts to convert Jews but did not specifically mention Messianic Jews, who accept Jesus as savior but who are not regarded as Jews by mainstream Judaism.



PHOTO © STAMMUC / TITINISTOCK

NOT SEEKING CONVERSION: The New Synagogue in Berlin, which was built in the mid-1800s and was one of few synagogues to survive Nazi destruction on Kristallnacht in 1938, now houses a congregation and a Jewish center. The largest Protestant church in Germany recently decided to end efforts to convert Jewish people to Christianity.

"The secret of God's revelation includes both the expectation of the return of Christ in splendor and the confidence that God will save his first-called people," the resolution said.

Some participants felt the declaration should have renounced the Messianic Jews and worried that the failure to mention them meant the EKD was keeping a door open to encourage Jews to convert.

Schuster, the Jewish leader, said he understood the renunciation of evangelization "also applies to the so-called Messianic Jews, who are not Jews."

Detlef Klahr, a senior church official, told journalists that evangelization of Jews was clearly ruled out by the resolution. —Tom Heneghan, Religion News Service

Germany cracks down on groups accused of recruiting terrorists

German police raided nearly 200 mosques, apartments, and offices connected to a Muslim group in mid-November after receiving information suggesting its members were recruiting people for the self-described Islamic State.

The sweep was part of a larger effort by Germany over the last few months to crack down on radicals as concerns of homegrown terrorism in the nation and in nearby European countries grows. Police targeted members of the group True Religion across 60 cities in the raids but did not make any arrests or locate the group's leader, who they believe lives in Bonn. Officials announced that the group would be banned from further operations in Germany.

"We are taking decisive and comprehensive action against all efforts directed against our freedom and our fundamental values," German interior minister Thomas de Maizière said.

True Religion is widely visible and known for running information tables and distributing free copies of the Qur'an. Despite its appearance as a legitimate religious organization, officials say the group

has recruited some 140 young people to fight in Syria and focuses its attention on Muslim teenagers, glorifying terrorism and a struggle against the German constitution in meetings and video messages.

The ban is the second largest on an Islamic group in Germany's history, following a 2001 decision to bar a group known as the *Kalifatstaat* ("caliphate state") on grounds that their activity threatened the nation's democracy. Leaders stressed that the ban was not meant as an attack on Muslims or religious freedom, but as a strong, united stance against radicalization.

"Today's ban does not target the promotion, practice, or propagation of the Islamic faith in general," de Maizière said. "Muslim life has a permanent and secure place in Germany and in our society."

True Religion said that its purpose is to share the message of the Qur'an. The group wrote on Twitter following the raids: "The Qur'an was banned in Germany. We provided Allah's message to everyone. Allahu akbar."

The ban follows the arrests of five men who authorities say aided ISIS by recruiting new members. They face accusations of providing financial and logistical assistance to potential fighters.

Officials believe that more than 800 people in Germany have been recruited by ISIS in recent years and that up to a third of those may have returned to the nation since.

"We don't want terrorism in Germany," de Maizière said. "And we don't want to export terrorism." —Amanda Hoover, *The Christian Science Monitor*

More congregations become sanctuaries for immigrants under threat of deportation

When Javier Flores, a 40-year-old father of three, received an order to surrender to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, he fled to Arch Street United Methodist Church. He said he is determined to stay in the United States for the sake of his children.

The north Philadelphia resident, who has no criminal convictions, entered the

United States from Mexico without papers in 1997. Since then, he has been deported and reentered several times.

"Today and every day, if Javier and his family choose to stay with us, they will have a home with us," said Robin Hynicka, senior pastor of the Arch Street church, on November 15.

During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump vowed to deport an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants. After his victory, he said he would immediately deport 2 to 3 million who have been convicted of crimes.

In the wake of the election, there has been an "outpouring of inquiries and support" from congregations across the country that want to sign on as sanctuary sites, said Peter Pedemonti, executive director of the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia.

"Churches are saying, 'We want to do this. How do we get started?'" said Pedemonti, whose coalition includes 17 churches and two synagogues that have banded together to oppose deportations and offer their buildings as safe havens.

Since 2014, 13 churches in nine cities have provided sanctuary to 15 people at risk of imminent deportation, said Noel Andersen, national grassroots coordinator for Church World Service, which provides legal services for immigrants. He estimated there are 400 congregations nationwide that support the efforts or are willing to open their doors to people fearing repatriation.

Churches, along with schools and hospitals, are considered "sensitive locations" by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. That means federal agents avoid arresting, searching, or interviewing people there under most circumstances.

The sanctuary tradition can be traced back to the Hebrew Bible. The book of Numbers cites six sanctuary cities throughout biblical Israel where a person who accidentally killed another could take refuge from anyone avenging the killing.

A more recent version is the American sanctuary church movement of the 1980s, in which hundreds of Central American refugees sought shelter in churches to avoid deportation.

In the current iteration, houses of worship are joined by urban mayors, as

well as colleges and universities, declaring that they will protect undocumented immigrants from deportation.

Christians in today's political climate are mixed on the question of immigration reform. While some evangelical groups such as the Evangelical Immigration Table have championed immigration reform, their efforts have not led to movement on the national level.

The major Hispanic evangelical organizations have advocated for comprehensive immigration reform but have not joined the sanctuary movement.

"Churches need to follow their conscience," said Gabriel Salguero, president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition. "If they feel they need to protect undocumented immigrants, they're within their biblical and theological right to do so. But the real preference is immigration reform. Sanctuary churches are a response. It's not the answer."

Tony Suarez, executive vice president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, which with 40,118 participating churches is the largest Hispanic evangelical association in the country, serves on Trump's Evangelical Executive Advisory Board.

"What we have been seeking is a true change in the system," Suarez said. "All this is a result of a broken system."

He said the advisory board has been meeting with the president-elect or his advisers on a weekly basis and that their immigration policy is "still evolving." He added the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference will advocate for "justice and mercy" for all undocumented people.

Although U.S. Catholic bishops urged Trump to adopt humane policies toward immigrants and refugees, not all bishops advocate for sanctuary churches.

Mainline churches, more liberal Catholic churches, and Jewish synagogues, however, are expected to join the movement and open their doors to people seeking refuge.

"It's really key that people of faith be active, especially white America," said Hynicka, of Arch Street United Methodist. "It's time to put your bodies, buildings, and assets on the line." —Elizabeth Evans, Yonat Shimron, and Kirkland An, Religion News Service

People



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLY INNOCENTS

■ When **Joshua Case** and parishioners at Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church bury some of Atlanta's youngest victims of violence, they often do so alone. In many cases, family members are absent from the child's life, lack transportation to the cemetery, or are incarcerated. Sometimes the state forbids them to attend.

For this brief, solemn service, Case, associate rector at Holy Innocents', and the others become the child's "family in mourning."

Since April Case has conducted 16 of these services, a small portion of the roughly 300 indigent burials each year paid for by the county. As he learned more about Georgia's young victims, Case met Cliff Dawkins, the chaplain who oversees the county's indigent burials. Case was stunned to learn that burials of children often were taking place with no family present and no witnesses other than Dawkins and cemetery staff.

"My first response was, 'Not in my county,'" Case said.

Dawkins invited Case to begin presiding over the children's burials, and a small group from Holy Innocents' formed to accompany Case to those services.

Mary Marvin Walter, 69, one of the parishioners who has joined Case at some of those grave sites, volunteered because she was unhappy with her instinct to judge those who caused such tragedies.

"I wanted to get beyond that, just be a witness without any questions," she said.

When that tiny coffin is blessed and lowered carefully into the ground, she resists the urge to ask why.

Holy Innocents', whose name refers to the biblical account of infanticide by Herod the Great, took a step toward answering the call of its name beginning in 2010 by holding an annual requiem mass and prayer vigil. The congregation reads the names of all the children in Georgia whose deaths were "sudden, unexpected, unexplained, suspicious, or attributed to unusual circumstances," according to Georgia law.

"Violence is a very broad category," said Ashley Willcott, director of Georgia's Office of the Child Advocate, which oversees the state's Division of Family and Children Services. "The bottom line is, we need to know: Could it have been prevented?"

Willcott praised churches that are bringing awareness to the plight of vulnerable children and getting their congregations involved.

She said Holy Innocents' is "really leading the way in combining the knowledge of 'this is what's happening to children' to 'what are the next steps?'"

Case's role is to lead the team taking those next steps. One initiative is called Caring for the Carers, which supports Family and Children Services caseworkers. The assistance may be providing emergency clothing for children removed from homes that the caseworkers deemed unsafe. Or it may mean listening to the caseworkers as they recount the trauma of their jobs.

The ministry has had a personal effect on Case, 39, who has two young children.

"I can tell you it's reshaped me as a father," he said. "I probably operate with a little more grace with my toddler than I did before." —David Paulsen, Episcopal News Service

■ The day after the election, **Lisa Sharon Harper** nearly gave up the name "evangelical."

Harper, chief church engagement officer at Sojourners, a progressive Christian organization, "felt betrayed" by the 81 percent of white evangelical Christians who voted for Donald Trump for president. Their vote

was essential to the victory of a candidate she described as "representing all of the things Jesus stood against—lust for money, sex, and power."

"I don't believe Jesus would look on this fear that is rising—fear and actual assaults that have risen," she said, "and say, 'We just need to agree to disagree and get along again.'"

In the end, Harper decided not to give up on the name *evangelical*, since it is a tradition that also includes William Wilberforce and Sojourner Truth.

She said Trump's election has helped her see where things have gone wrong, and where she needed to hear the "very real cry from white America, particularly rural white America."

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, was also among those evangelical leaders who vocally opposed Trump. The campaign reminded him of the Vietnam War in the way it divided families.

He said the evangelical leaders who "repurposed the gospel itself in order to defend a political candidate" reveal a problem bigger than a political election.

Moore makes a distinction even among those who voted for Trump: there were "reluctant Trumpers," who regarded the candidate as the lesser of two evils, believing he was likely to appoint a Supreme Court justice who was against abortion.

Then there were "the people who have actively sought to normalize" Trump as the candidate of choice.

"For me, I think the bigger issue is with the political activist religious right establishment that in many cases actually waved away major moral problems," he said, citing the *Access Hollywood* tape, in which the now president-elect talked about grabbing women by their genitals and forcibly kissing them.

Moore argues that it's up to a new generation of evangelicals not to disengage from politics, but rather to create new coalitions that preserve the "best of religious conservatism." —Emily McFarlan Miller, Religion News Service



RNS PHOTO BY ADELE M. BARNES



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA SHARON HARPER

LIVING The Word

January 8, Baptism of the Lord

THE BAPTISMAL TEXT begins a pattern in Jesus' ministry that I'm not sure is taken with enough seriousness: Jesus continually empowering the church for service rather than limiting that power to himself.

In Matthew's text it seems likely that Jesus' baptism hearkens toward Matthew's inclination to weave his narrative of Jesus' ministry into the scriptural foundations of messianic expectation. When taken in concert with all four Gospels, however, a subtle but powerful pattern emerges: the very crux of Jesus' messianism is empowerment of the church, of all those who will come after to continue God's mission of giving life.

John's protest that he should be baptized by Jesus and not the other way around presents in its own way a kind of foreshadowing of what will come immediately after in Matthew's Gospel: the temptation in the wilderness. Now we can assume that John's intentions in the request for Jesus to baptize him were born out of sincere awe and respect for what he believed Jesus to represent, and we can assume more malicious intentions from the devil that Jesus encounters in the wilderness. But what unites both episodes is the temptation for Jesus to arrogate to himself a messianic authority that would be centered upon consolidating power—the Messiah baptizes and not the other way around, the Messiah rules the earth rather than serving it, etc. Jesus' demurral at his baptism is the messianic demurral of arrogation that will define his ministry.

Throughout all four Gospels we see the remarkable insistence on the part of Jesus that the power to heal the world in and through which Jesus has been sent is something that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus intends to share with the church, and to multiplying effect. In John, Jesus argues that, contrary to the disciples' expectations, it's better for them if he departs so that the Holy Spirit can do its work of constituting their ministry, and that of their descendants (John 16:7); he had already made the claim that those coming after him would do "greater things" (John 14:12). Meanwhile, the entire sweep of Luke-Acts is designed to demonstrate how the church recapitulates and enhances Jesus' ministry by undergoing the same sort of trials, changes in tactics and audience, persecutions, and healing victories that Jesus himself endures on earth.

Like all aspects of Jesus' ministry, the baptism of Jesus is localized and indexed to a particular time and place—*this*

river, *this* baptism, *these* people, *this* given need for healing, *this* context. This localization is the very heart of incarnation. It's from this beating heart of particularity and deep immersion in context that Jesus begins his ministry. He points toward the ways in which the Messiah comes—not to gather power, but to disperse it, to empower (a ministry that begins in the kenosis of the incarnation itself)—then continues through the scandal of the cross and moves with us into the present day, when the church seeks to stay faithful to its task of embodying Christ on earth.

However, lest such an ecclesiology lead the church into arrogance—"We are the ones doing the greater things!"—we note that the diffusion that Jesus practices in the Gospels is more radical than we sometimes want to admit. Sometimes the "greater things" are done by those into whose hands we might not be inclined to commend such ministry: tax collectors, Roman soldiers, or Samaritans. Those of us formed by font and table, those who have heard the proclamation that we are God's beloved and pledge to follow the Messiah, should expect that words of truth, justice, and healing will be spoken outside our walls for our hearing, and that deeds pleasing to God will be carried on by those

The power to heal the world is something Jesus intends to share with the church.

who do not make their home in our ecclesial spaces. This encompasses a venerable scriptural pattern, from the chastening of Israel to the Syrophenician woman who upends the disciples' understanding of Jesus' ministry. Whenever we think we have established the borders of God's empowerment to ministry, the Holy Spirit sets up camp just beyond them.

In my own tradition it's common for the Christ candle that is lit prominently during baptismal services to be equally prominent in funerals—the completion of the baptismal journey. As our ministry on earth is inaugurated, so we carry through to the end. This is also the case with Jesus—his baptism signals and encompasses the entire sweep of what is to come in his ministry, and the shape that it will take.

If every baptized Christian is to be, as theologian Kathryn Tanner has argued, a kind of minister of God's unendingly generous blessing upon all creation, then we can take our bearing and orientation from the promises made in our immersion—we will be as deeply immersed in the world as Jesus is, called to love it more than it loves itself and to take the opportunity to empower the giving of life rather than restrain it.

Reflections on the lectionary

January 15, Second Sunday after Epiphany

John 1:29-42

YOU WILL SEE greater things than these.”

“You will see a public ministry that grows at incredible speed until thousands of people are fed on a hillside because they are so desperate for a word of hope from me. But you will see them depart as well, once I do not say all that they want to hear—or say more than they want to hear—about what I came to do.”

“You will see healing that might strike you as downright irresponsible in its profligacy—going into places of pain and loneliness that are hard to look upon, places we have found it so easy not to see, or to theologize our lack of vision away.”

“You will see scandalization of the faith that you thought you knew, all in the name of drawing you deeper into the covenant made between the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God’s people.”

“You will see the tears of a mother that only full humanity, full incarnation, can warrant.”

“You will see triumph take the shape of the cross.”

“You will see death and martyrdom and failure so large that it will look like I have been leading you on a fool’s errand. But you will see faithfulness and perseverance, and God’s surprising healing that will take your breath away and reshape your sense of what is possible in God’s world.”

“You will see the kingdom of God, but it will not be what you expected to see. And you will see the day when you will rejoice that it was so much more than you could have expected.”

Jesus was not kidding, then or now.

I see a lot of evangelism strategies or inviting people to “come and see” what is happening in church. Less clear, in many of those instances, is the object of the seeing: What exactly is it that we are inviting people to come and see? What would inspire in us the confidence that Jesus himself had in believing that the life to which he was calling his disciples—a life marked by divine spectacles of rent heavens and fulfilled prophecies, but also by persecution, fear, and a need to trust in God’s plan for redemption beyond any reasonable evidence—was one worth undertaking?

See what? What is it that we are promising—explicitly or implicitly—when we invite others on the discipleship journey?

Community? People can find community anywhere, and besides, few honest congregations want the viability of their mission to rise and fall on their success in being welcoming communities.

Justice? Wayne Miller of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod

(ELCA) argues, “You can’t follow Jesus for ten steps without bumping into questions of justice, but you can chase justice for 1,000 miles and still not find Jesus.” If the church rises or falls on its ability to foster justice and oppose systemic evil, then the church’s mission likely would not have survived our own transgressions. Our own failures in justice should never lead to complacency, but one hopes they breed humility about what we can promise.

Life purpose and fulfillment? The church should be skeptical about engaging in fulfillment marketing when the terms of that engagement are defined by a pursuit of ease and stability—“peace, peace when there is no peace.” A church that promises

What is it we are promising when we invite others to discipleship?

purpose that is not cross-shaped is a church that forms people to evade the call to discipleship, not to listen for it. The life of discipleship is a life of purpose, but it is discipleship before it is purpose. Following Jesus might result in “your best life now,” but not without thoroughly messing with your sense of what “best” means.

The step of inviting others to come and see is to pray for eyes to see what is already in the church—the God who comes to us in font and table, in Word and teaching, in the acts of service that we see and in those that are invisible. Fulfillment, formation in justice, and a community of fidelity to God’s action in the world are powerful by-products of engagement with the church, but what God truly invites us *all*—inside and outside the church—to come and see is the way God brings life out of the places of death in our world.

The confidence that invites others to discipleship in Jesus Christ does not depend on providing a good “experience” of church. Churches fail in discipleship, and no one should be more comfortable than Christians with the idea that all who follow God’s call stand in need of God’s grace. But we can promise that the adventure of discipleship to which we invite others is ultimately not an adventure that we own or control. We are not the tour guides—we are the ones led, the ones who stand in need of new eyes to see and new ears to hear, day in and day out. The call to “come and see” is a call to surprise, and to new possibilities of joy within that surprise.

The author is Robert Saler, who is executive director of the Center for Pastoral Excellence at Christian Theological Seminary and author of Between Magisterium and Marketplace and Theologia Crucis.



After living for years in a refugee camp in Tanzania, Joel Makeci Ebuela, his wife, Bikyeombe Abwe, and their five children have settled into an apartment in Missoula, Montana. Ebuela keeps in close contact with his family in Tanzania through e-mail and Facebook. Photo © Jeremy Lurgio.

RESETTLING REFUGEES IN A TIME OF FEAR

Welcome to Missoula

by Amy Frykholm

WHEN I ARRIVED in Missoula, I felt very cold,” said Joel Makeci Ebuela, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Before coming to Montana in September, Ebuela had lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania since he was 11. Ebuela, his wife, Bikyeombe Abwe, and their five children are now settling into a new life in the United States.

Their journey to Missoula began more than a year ago when Ebuela and Abwe applied for resettlement. In August 2016 the International Office of Migration, which works with governmental and nongovernmental partners, sent a bus into the red dust of the Nyarugusu refugee camp to pick up the Ebuela family. The couple piled their children into the bus, not knowing where they were going. “You haven’t any choices,” said Ebuela. When I asked him at what point he knew he was coming to Missoula, he said it was when he got off the plane. “I got off the plane and asked, ‘Where am I?’” The day they arrived in Missoula it was damp and rainy. “They told me that after a month or two months, there will be snow! . . . I have never seen snow. I will see it.”

The Congolese refugees have arrived at a time when the situation of refugees is politically precarious. In August, President Obama pledged before the United Nations General Assembly to increase the number of refugees admitted to the United States—but that pledge was met with domestic rancor. An anti-immigration and antirefugee wave fueled the presidential campaign of Donald Trump, and Trump’s election has cast uncertainty over refugee resettlement programs.

During the campaign, Trump railed against the “flood” of refugees coming to the United States. Voicing concerns about terrorism, 30 governors—including Mike Pence of Indiana, Trump’s running mate—told the federal government they would not accept refugees from Syria. (A federal court later determined that Indiana did not have the right to accept or reject refugees based on national origin.) In October, three men were arrested for planning to set off bombs outside an apartment complex in Wichita, Kansas, that is known as a home to refugees. Their aim was for the bombs to go off the day after the national election. The political rhetoric about refugees has become heated and potentially violent in a way that will extend far beyond Election Day.

But some Americans have mounted a very different response to the plight of the 65 million people who are displaced worldwide. In the fall of 2015, at the same time that Ebuela and Abwe were submitting applications for resettlement, newspapers, computers, and TV screens around the globe were showing the heartbreaking image of a drowned three-year-old Syrian refugee, Alan Kurdi, who lost his life trying to reach Turkey along with his family. One of those who saw the photo was Mary Poole, a longtime resident of Missoula. She and her friends found themselves discussing the photo.

“I didn’t even know what a refugee was,” Poole recalled. “But the feeling that I needed to do something did not go away.” Poole had recently become a new mother, and the photo of Kurdi haunted her. She still tears up when she talks about it.

Poole started making phone calls to organizations that resettle refugees, learning far more than she ever knew there was to learn about the process of resettlement. One agency she called was the International Rescue Committee in Seattle, which ran an office in Missoula until 2008. The man who answered the phone was Bob Johnson, who had opened the IRC’s Missoula office in 1979.

Just four days from retirement, Johnson agreed to help Poole reopen the office in Missoula. Missoula is the only community that has ever requested the opening of an IRC office on its own. In conjunction, Poole founded the organization Soft Landing Missoula to help welcome immigrants.

The work of the IRC and Soft Landing Missoula quickly became controversial. Greg Gianforte, the Republican candidate for governor—who lost narrowly in November—sent out a mailer showing a man in a turban carrying a Kalashnikov rifle. The text promised that Gianforte would “stand up to dangerous refugee programs” and refuse entry to “unvetted refugees.” After the election, it is not clear what effect this kind of antirefugee rhetoric will have, but it is clear that many people in Montana and nationally resonated with it.

Protesters against the refugee program showed up at meetings of the Missoula city council and the county commission in numbers that surprised Poole. Volunteers, politicians, and clergy who supported the resettlement effort have all received death threats.

Despite much criticism, efforts to resettle refugees are on the increase in the U.S.

Right after the city council signed a letter of support for Soft Landing and the IRC, councilman Jon Wilkins started to receive letters, calls, and e-mails against the proposal to bring refugees to the area. “It’s just fear,” he said. “People are afraid of what they don’t understand.”

Wilkins showed me a letter he had received from Ed Kugler, founder of the ACT for America chapter in Lake County, Montana, north of Missoula. ACT for America has been one of the most vocal opponents of refugee resettlement.

In the letter, Kugler asserted that there is insufficient vetting of refugees, and that the Department of Homeland Security cannot guarantee the identity of the people who are coming to the United States. Echoing Trump, Kugler claimed that the country is being “intentionally flooded with refugees from Muslim countries.” He called the arrival of refugees an “invasion being forced on us.” Kugler also said that there is too little housing for refugees in Missoula and that the IRC is a self-interested organization.

In October, ACT for America sponsored a lecture in Missoula by Shahram Hadian, an Iranian who travels around the country speaking about what he calls the “true face of Islam.” Linda Sauer, cochair of ACT’s Lake County chapter, told those gathered for the lecture that the event was not a response to recently arrived immigrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, like Ebuela, who are mostly Protestant Christians. As Sauer and Hadian held forth inside the hotel where the event took place, Poole and others from Soft Landing gathered outside with members of Standing Alongside America’s Muslims to offer a counter message. They carried signs that said, “My Missoula includes Muslims.”

Kugler sees immigration as a battleground. “The battle today is no longer Republican or Democrat, but a battle for our nation and our great state.”

Indeed, Poole and Kugler seem to have two opposite understandings of what it is to be an American. ACT for America, which calls itself “the NRA of national security,” was founded in 2007 by Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese American. By 2016, it claimed to have more than 300,000 members and 1,000 chapters nationwide. In the season of Trump, the group found its voice and platform. It views all immigrants with suspicion but is especially worried about Muslims. ACT for America exists, according to its website, to protect “Western civilization against the threat of radical Islam.”

Resettlement agencies in the United States rely on volunteer groups.

By contrast, Poole sees America as a place of abundant resources and hospitable people who are willing to share what they have. Everywhere she looks, she finds resources and ready volunteers. “Yes, we’ve received death threats,” she said, “but for every one of those there are 30 volunteers.”

Soft Landing has organized teams of five volunteers to coordinate help for each refugee family. It has over 400 people ready to serve on those teams, and more than 1,000 on the mailing list of people willing to help with supplies, donations, and other forms of support. She envisions creating a community center where refugees and Missoulians can cook together, celebrate holidays together, and teach each other languages and traditions.

Shaun Casey, special representative of the Office of Religion and Global Affairs at the U.S. State Department, sees Poole’s work being replicated nationwide. He said that even in a political environment that has turned negative, people at the grass roots have responded to refugee resettlement with an “amazing” level of innovation and collaboration. He is struck by how much of the collaboration is interreligious.

He recalled going into the office of a resettlement center in Jersey City, New Jersey. “This is going to sound like a bad joke,” he said, “but sitting at the table was an imam, a pastor, and a rabbi.” The three had met each other through the relief agency Church World Service.

“Something is afoot at the grassroots level,” Casey said. Part of it is the desire to increase the amount of aid to refugees, “but there is also the ancillary benefit of a new form of interreligious interaction.”

In the refugee resettlement communities that he visited last year, he said, reports of political vitriol would lead to an increased number of calls to refugee centers saying, “How can we help?”

Molly Short Carr heads the Missoula office of the IRC. She believes that the United States takes the right approach to refugee resettlement and that it is a process other countries can learn from. Specifically, she praises the United States for its community-oriented approach. Communities are carefully screened and selected for resettlement efforts. Refugee resettlement relies on volunteers to help refugees make the transition to American life, and this provides the opportunity for faster and more thorough integration between refugees and their communities.

“What we do is a measured approach that involves public-private partnerships, where core services are provided, but integration happens through volunteer support,” said Carr. “We can’t make refugees integrate. The community has to provide that support.”

Poole has started receiving phone calls about how to take the resettlement program to other communities. Fledgling groups in Helena, Billings, and Bozeman have contacted her asking how they might follow Missoula’s lead.

“Missoula has a chance to be a leader—a national and an international leader when it comes to being a welcoming community,” Poole told a class in the basement of the First United Methodist Church in downtown Missoula.

She went on to talk about the benefits of refugees in the form of economic growth, cultural literacy, and enriched lives. “Refugees are also customers in our stores, small business owners, taxpayers.” She paused over this point. “They pay taxes just like the rest of us.” The group broke into laughter. The day before the event, the *New York Times* had printed pages of Donald Trump’s tax returns that suggested he may not have paid income taxes in a number of years.

At four o’clock on a Monday afternoon, Joel and Bikyeombe are waiting for their 11-year-old son to come home from school. On the wall of the dining room in their apartment is a clock, a calendar, and a large map of Missoula, all evidence of their struggle to orient themselves to their American environment. These items are also evidence of the constant flow of support from volunteers.

As the younger children eat plates of rice and chicken, Joel tells me that he decided to apply for resettlement because of his distress at the problems he faced in both his home country and Tanzania. He lists them: crime, war, ethnic violence, lack of education and opportunities for his children. “I asked myself, ‘How can I start to live? What can I do? How can I give my effort to my children so they may eat and have a house?’ So I decided to start the process to come here.”

In just a few weeks, Joel will be expected to pay the \$925 rent for his apartment. He expects to take a job—it will be any job that he can get. Bikyeombe is starting work cleaning hotel rooms. Joel’s dream is to go to school and study to be a teacher or a nurse. Both he and Bikyeombe are musicians who have recorded their music together, and he is eager to share these gifts in America.

After eating, the children put on coats and go outside to play with six-year-old Brittany, daughter of Amy Lee, who lives in the apartment downstairs. Lee said that when she first



Ava Parsons, 12, catches three-year-old Bertha Joel Makeci while playing outside their homes on a rainy day. The Congolese refugee family moved into an apartment in Missoula and within a few days had made friends with many of the kids in the neighborhood. Photo © Jeremy Lurgio.

heard that refugees were coming to Missoula, she was opposed to the plan. It was hard enough, she said, to make ends meet for her own family and to get access to the health care they need. What good would it do to bring in more needy people?

Her view changed when she met the family and heard their story. Lee has become an important friend and ally. “I like the whole family,” she said on an afternoon outside their apartment building while the children played. “But that one,” she pointed to Joel and Bikyeombe’s three-year-old daughter Bertha, “I already love.”

The next day, I sat with another refugee family at a card table in their apartment. Joseph Bazungu and Vanis Nyiraburango and their 15-year-old daughter Sifa had arrived just three weeks before from a refugee camp in Uganda. Like Joel and Bikyeombe, they were born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and spent some of their childhood there but had lived in a refugee camp for almost two decades. Also like Joel and Bikyeombe, they had no idea when they left Uganda that they were headed to Missoula. Soon after they arrived, a celebration broke out. Joseph’s cousin had

arrived from the same camp to the same city. The two men danced in the airport.

The room was sparsely furnished, with just a couch and a lamp on a side table. A few days earlier, a load of furniture from the Holiday Inn had arrived for the family at the parking lot of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Scores of barely used tables, chairs, and other furniture were unloaded by volunteers for use in refugees’ homes. I couldn’t help looking around the room to see what else the family might need. I noticed that the only book in the room was a Bible, open on the side table.

With the help of Google-translated and pieced-together English, we talked about their hopes and concerns for life in Montana. I learned the Swahili word for *worry*. “My *wasi-wasi*,” Joseph said, “is to learn English.” The couple shook their heads at the difficulty. “English is hard,” Vanis said.

What did they hope for? There was a discussion among the three at the table, searching for the word in English. Joseph said finally, “We hope here to experience life.”

When I left Vanis and Joseph’s apartment, it was again rainy and cold. I looked up at the mountains that surround Missoula and saw that they had snow.

Fifty years of the *Good News* translation

A Bible for everyone?

by John Fea

FOR A BABY BOOMER named Rick, the cover of *Good News for Modern Man* evoked a flood of wonderful memories. Responding to an online survey that I conducted on the impact of this version of the Bible, Rick reported that in the late 1960s he was a member of a youth group in California which sang folk-rock Christian songs using acoustic guitars. Rick's church gave out copies of *Good News for Modern Man* like candy. As youth group started each week, he and his friends would crowd together "and somebody would start tossing—literally tossing—the Testament and a brown Youth for Christ songbook" to everyone in attendance. Like typical adolescent boys, Rick and his friends got rowdy sometimes, and they used the copies of *Good News* to beat one another over the head until the youth pastor calmed everyone down.

Tom, another respondent to the survey, remembered that in 1972 he was a charismatic Catholic participating in an ecumenical Jesus People prayer meeting with Pentecostals. When they weren't on the ground speaking in tongues (which Tom called a "joyous babble in the Spirit") they were playing "Bible roulette" with their copies of *Good News for Modern Man*. Somebody would randomly read a passage aloud, and one or two people in the group would comment on how the particular passage spoke to them.

Released by the American Bible Society in September 1966, *Good News for Modern Man*—subtitled *The New Testament and Psalms in Today's English Version*—quickly became a cultural phenomenon and one of the most successful religious publications in American history. For the price of a quarter, the English-speaking public (and eventually the world) could read the Bible in a language that was (in the words of ABS publicity materials) "as fresh and immediate as the morning newspaper."

Good News for Modern Man was the brainchild of Eugene Nida, an ABS linguist who pioneered the "dynamic equivalence" approach to Bible translation. At the heart of this theory is the idea that the best translation of a Bible text is one that allows readers to forget they are reading a translation at all. Nida was one of the first Bible translation theorists to take the linguistic position of the reader this seriously. A good translation, he argued, would arouse in the reader the same reaction that the writer of the text hoped to produce in his "first and immediate" readers. For Nida, the test of a translation is how well the readers understand the message of the original text, the ease with which they can grasp this meaning, and the level

of involvement with the text that a person experiences as a result of reading the translation.

On the latter point, Nida wrote, "perhaps no better compliment could come to a translator than to have someone say, 'I never knew before that God spoke my language.'" He was convinced that it was necessary at times to change the words of the Bible. Translators seeking dynamic equivalence were willing to move away from a word-for-word approach toward a meaning-for-meaning or thought-for-thought approach.

Nida turned to Robert Bratcher, a Southern Baptist Bible scholar, to produce a dynamic equivalent translation of the Bible. Bratcher and his committee developed short and simple sentences, each containing "one or two ideas or statements of

Within a few years, 30 million copies of the *Good News Bible* had been sold.

fact," and they used a style Bratcher called "modern American vernacular." He strove for clarity and refused to use archaic terms such as *thee* or *thou*, which the Revised Standard Version—produced at midcentury—still used when referring to God.

In the Today's English Version, Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount does not say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (as he does in the Revised Standard Version) but "Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!" And instead of "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth," TEV's Jesus says, "Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!"

Bratcher also wanted his translation to be "precise." All ambiguity was to be avoided. If there were multiple ways to translate a particular Greek passage, Bratcher would choose one and simply disregard the others. No alternative readings were listed in footnotes.

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PSALM 9: "I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the wonderful things you have done. I will sing with joy because of you. I will sing praise to you, Almighty God." (Illustration by Swiss artist and storyteller Annie Vallotton, as taken from the *Good News Translation* © 1976, 1992, 2015 American Bible Society.)

Good News for Modern Man was released after two and a half years of work. It was 608 pages long and appeared with a gray paperback cover filled with black lines, giving it the look of a newspaper page. The title was printed in bold red letters in the upper left corner protruding from what appears to be a tear or a hole in a newspaper. The subtitle was printed in smaller red letters within a similar jagged hole in the lower right. Scattered across the cover—both the front and the back—were the mastheads of international newspapers. The image suggests that "good news" is breaking through the depressing stories found in the daily newspapers. The message of Jesus Christ is breaking news for humankind.

The response to the work was overwhelming. The United Methodist Church bought 250,000 copies of the TEV *Sermon on the Mount*. The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention purchased 100,000 copies of *Good News*. In the first year of publication the ABS distributed over 5.5 million copies of the new translation and by the end of 1967 that number had reached over 8.5 million. In May 1971 the book blew past *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care* (which had sold 25 million copies) as the all-time paperback best seller, and by the end of 1971 it had reached the 30 million mark.

Besides providing a fresh, readable translation, *The New Testament and Psalms in Today's English Version* included appealing illustrations. Bratcher received his share of accolades for the TEV, but the success of his translation brought international attention to 50-year-old Swiss artist Annie

Vallotton. *Good News for Modern Man* included 378 of Vallotton's line drawings, done in a style Vallotton called "sparse" and "childishly naive."

The biblical scholar Raymond Brown, who was president of the Catholic Biblical Association when the TEV was released, told the *New York Times* that he found the "little stick men . . . kind of catchy." The simple style of the drawings were a perfect fit for a simple translation. Vallotton hoped that they would "open a door to the Bible" and provide "a springboard" for people to explore the word of God in a deeper fashion.

The ABS was quick to point out that Vallotton's drawings transcended nationality, language, and race. By omitting facial details, skin color, and other cultural indicators, Vallotton hoped that every reader would see in the illustrations their own Jesus, one that was "particularly right for him or her." The nature of these illustrations added to the ecumenical feel of *Good News for Modern Man*. This was a Bible for everyone.

Following Vatican II, with its renewed emphasis on biblical literacy, Catholics had begun looking for readable translations of the Bible, and many of them turned to *Good News for Modern Man*. Father Walter Abbott of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, a staunch defender of Protestant-Catholic relations based on a shared Bible, called it "the best modern version for the people that I have yet seen." Warner Hutchinson, who was serving as Asia consultant for the United Bible Societies, wrote to the ABS in May 1968 that *Good News* was being used in Catholic schools in New Guinea. He also reported that the bishop of Chile had purchased 2,000 copies for distribution among his parishes.

In March 1969, Cardinal Richard Cushing, archbishop of Boston, approved the TEV for Catholic readers and gave it an official imprimatur. The imprimatur edition was blue with a small Maltese cross on the spine and front. ABS general secretary Laton Holmgren delivered Cushing's copy personally. *Good News for Modern Man* did, in fact, do a lot to bring Catholics and Protestants together.

Some enthusiasts believed that the accessibility of *Good News for Modern Man* made it an ideal tool for evangelism. Nida thought that it spoke directly to "those who have never become acquainted with the time-hallowed religious vocabulary and to those who have been alienated from established religious institutions." He thought that its use in evangelism

was one of the reasons why *Good News* was so successful. Billy Graham informed Holmgren that he was now using the TEV in both his personal devotions and during his evangelistic crusades.

In 1968, the ABS produced 1.3 million copies of a special version of *Good News* for the Baptist General Convention of Texas as part of its participation in the Crusade of the Americas, a massive evangelistic campaign conducted throughout the Western hemisphere. It was the largest request for Bibles the ABS had ever received—a "Texas-sized order." Inside the special Testament was published a list of "steps to becoming a Christian." The list encouraged readers to acknowledge their need for God, recognize God's love, repent of their sins, accept Jesus Christ and his forgiveness as "the only way of encountering God," and commit to God's plan for their lives. The section ended with a prayer that readers could pray to receive salvation. There was a spot to write one's name and the date on which they accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior and Lord.

So Job died old and full of days

Crammed and jammed
Bursting with days
Job died old and full of days

So full of days
He died
Died from days clotted with friends,
Eliphaz, Bildad and
Zophar
And don't forget Elihu
Late but stuffed with wisdom too
Friends certain and smug
Wiseacres knowing all
Everything about this life
Except of course the life of Job

So full of days
He died
Died from days God awed
The heavenly court and Satan dialogue
Travel reports and near endless silence
Lordly Master, God knowing all
Everything about the creation
Except of course the children of Job

So full of days
He died
Died from days teeming with nature
Treasury of snow, hems of oceans
The Venus hind birthing at dawn
The morning stars singing
Nature indifferent knowing all
Everything about the world
Except of course the emptiness of Job

Who died old and full of days

Yehiel Poupko

Not everyone was enthusiastic about *Good News for Modern Man*. Some scholars thought Bratcher's translation was simplistic, pitched at too low a level of reading ability. Evangelical scholars worried that a thought-for-thought translation rather than word-for-word translation amounted to a paraphrase of scripture and undermined the conviction that every single word of the Bible is inspired by God.


In 1969, E. L. Bynum, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, wrote a pamphlet titled "Why We

The goal was to have readers say, "God speaks my language."

Reject This Version," arguing that the TEV undermined some fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, including the virgin birth of Jesus. He pointed out that it had used the word *woman* rather than *virgin* in translating the prophecy in Isaiah 7 about a woman giving birth to "Immanuel"—a prophecy picked up by New Testament writers when they affirmed that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin. (Bynum's criticism resurrected a previous controversy regarding a similar decision made by translators of the RSV.) The TEV translators also removed the words *blood* and *redemption* from the text, playing down the traditional teaching that Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifice of animals as a means to the forgiveness of sins. It is hard to know what kind of impact Bynum's pamphlet had on the conservative opposition to *Good News for Modern Man* (he claimed that 700,000 copies of his pamphlet were in circulation), but it did not appear to hurt overall sales.

Good News for Modern Man drew other complaints. Rebecca Marchand, an ABS supporter from Fort Lauderdale,

Florida, was bothered by the gender exclusive title. “Why was *Good News for Modern Man* ever called by that title? Especially in these days when women are trying to find equality.” The ABS responded by noting that the *man* in the title, “as any dictionary will convey,” was used as a generic term that does not “of necessity connote sex—male or female.” The ABS also noted that when the entire TEV Bible became available, it would be called the *Good News Bible*.

Nida’s vision for a Bible in plain English language represented an important chapter in the post-Protestant Reformation quest to make the Bible accessible and readable to as many people as possible in the hope that their lives might be changed by its life-giving message. *Good News for Modern Man* set the stage for other dynamic equivalence Bibles and paraphrases such as *The Message*, *The Voice*, *The New International Version*, and *The New Living Translation*. It spurred a rise in Bible sales in the early 1970s, and made the American Bible Society a household name among Christians. Today the *Good News Bible* (often referred to by its official name, the *Good News Translation*) remains in print—and it remains a significant part of countless baby boomers’ spiritual pilgrimage. 



LUKE 9:15–17: “After the disciples had done so, Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, thanked God for them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and had enough, and the disciples took up twelve baskets of what was left over.” (Illustration by Swiss artist and storyteller Annie Vallotton, as taken from the *Good News Translation* © 1976, 1992, 2015 American Bible Society.)

Cancer treatment can wreak havoc on a child’s appetite at a time when nutrition couldn’t be more important. For help, turn to CureSearch.org, a comprehensive website that covers every aspect of childhood cancer. It connects you to the network of doctors and scientists whose collaborative research has turned childhood cancer from a nearly incurable disease to one with an overall cure rate of 78%. So now you can help get him from barely eating to back to his typical picky self.

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You’re not as alone as you feel.

I choose, therefore I am

by Robert Westbrook

EXISTENTIALISM, which was all the rage in Europe and America in the late '40s, '50s, and early '60s, has lost much discernible meaning. One rarely even hears the term these days. In our age of terror, one is most likely to encounter *existential* used in claims of "existential threats" to national security that call for the relaxation of moral scruples against torture, assassination, and the slaughter of civilians. Jean-Paul Sartre would not be amused.

In the United States, no one threw the term *existential* around in careless fashion more than Norman Mailer, the one American author who explicitly assumed the mantle of "existentialist" and held a significant role in ushering existentialism into the twilight. When I was in college at Yale in the early '70s, my friend Mark Singer (now a longtime staff writer at the *New Yorker*) was working on a senior thesis on Hemingway and Mailer as journalists. Mailer came to visit the campus, and Mark eagerly attended a dinner in his honor, hosted at Calhoun College by the critic and literary biographer R. W. B. Lewis.

Here is Mark's account of the event:

The dinner was at Lewis's house in Calhoun. I'd been present earlier in the afternoon as Mailer sat in the living room and enraged the undergraduate women present by lobbing grenades straight out of *The Prisoner of Sex*. As I was leaving, Lewis invited me to come back earlier than that evening's dinner guests, so I could speak with Mailer one-on-one. During the interval, I went to my room in the Berkeley North Court and smoked a joint the size of a baseball bat. Then, à la Mailer himself, I floated back to Lewis's to speak with the great man about his and Hemingway's journalism. (If I were ever subjected to a recording of that conversation, I'd have to be restrained from defenestrating myself.)

The other guests arrived, I was drinking Scotch, and sitting in on a conversation Mailer was having with I don't recall who. I do recall that I found it completely compelling, but, then, I really had to pee. I leaned over to Mailer and said something like, "What do you do when you're in a conversation as thrilling as your overwhelming urge to take a leak?" He looked at me squarely and said, "That's existential."

I headed to the john . . . WTF did he mean? I have no idea, but I was too in awe to consider that Mailer might not have had one either. In retrospect I recognize that his refer-

ences to existentialism butchered Sartre so cavalierly he should have been arrested for negligent homicide, but I lacked the tools (i.e., powers of discrimination) to explore the matter more deeply.

Mailer, on an earlier occasion, reportedly told British writer Colin Wilson that to him existentialism meant "Oh, kinda playing things by ear."

Sarah Bakewell observes Mailer's shaky grip on existentialist philosophy in passing in her exceptionally fine book on the subject. She has all the tools necessary to explore the matter deeply and lucidly, and she makes the case to even the most skeptical readers for giving existentialism, properly understood, another look.

Bakewell is a marvel. No one better writes what some might call "popular intellectual history" (although I would prefer to call it good intellectual history). Her 2010 book *How to Live*, an impressive and widely read tour of the life, thought, and influence

There was a time when *existential* meant something.

of the late 16th-century French moralist Michel de Montaigne, made her exceptional talent evident. *At the Existentialist Café* features a much larger cast of characters, and she skillfully weaves together the intellectual biographies of a crowd of transatlantic thinkers. Her "giants" are (rightfully so) Martin Heidegger and Sartre, to whom she devotes the closest attention. But they share the stage with chief supporting actors Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Among others in more minor roles are Hannah Arendt, Raymond Aron,

Robert Westbrook teaches modern intellectual history at the University of Rochester and is the author of *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth*.



**At the Existentialist Café:
Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails**
By Sarah Bakewell
Other Press, 448 pp., \$25.00

Frantz Fanon, Edmund Husserl, Karl Jaspers, Emmanuel Levinas, Iris Murdoch, Jan Patočka, and Richard Wright.

Bakewell's approach to these figures is both biographical and philosophical: "I think philosophy becomes more interesting when it is cast into the form of a life." She is right about this, but the temptation when writing for a wide audience of non-philosophers is to sacrifice the philosophical (with its careful attention to difficult texts) to the biographical and the contextual. Bakewell makes no such sacrifices, and in this sense her book well outstrips most other attempts by intellectual historians to reach general readers.

She adeptly portrays the personal lives of her protagonists, not least the unconventional partnership of Sartre and Beauvoir and the often bitter shattering of friendships such as that of Sartre and Camus. And she connects the thinking of her philosophers to their significant shaping contexts, including the trauma of World War I, the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust, the French defeat at the hands of the Germans in World War II, the subsequent devastation of Germany by Allied armies, the political battles over communism in the '50s and '60s, and the dismantling of French colonialism.

But Bakewell also shines in describing and analyzing very difficult ideas—sometimes expressed in willfully difficult fashion by the likes of Heidegger, Levinas, and others—with remarkable clarity and force. She has an enviable talent for calling up analogies, examples, and comparisons that illuminate the opaque corners of modern philosophy.

Existentialism grew out of phenomenology, and Bakewell begins her account with the meeting in December 1932 in a Paris café of three young French friends who had just launched academic careers: Aron, Sartre, and Beauvoir. Aron, just returned from Germany, was excitedly bringing news to the others of a radical new approach to philosophy pioneered by Freiburg professor Edmund Husserl, who termed it *phenomenology*. Husserl's battle cry was "To the things themselves!" By this he meant (in one of Bakewell's many pithy succinct summaries), "Don't waste time on the interpretations that accrue upon things, and especially don't waste time wondering whether the things are real. Just look at *this* that's presenting itself to you, whatever *this* may be, and describe it

as precisely as possible." In sum, Aron told them, you can make philosophy out of something as ordinary as the apricot cocktail on our table.

Sartre was "knocked out," and he soon departed for Germany to find out about phenomenology for himself. There, as Bakewell says in one of her particularly lovely passages, he began to craft

a philosophy of expectation, tiredness, apprehensiveness, excitement, a walk up a hill, the passion for a desired lover, the revulsion from an unwanted one, Parisian gardens, the cold autumn sea at Le Havre, the feeling of sitting on over-

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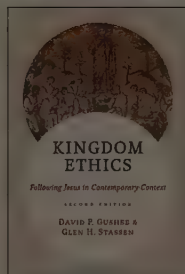
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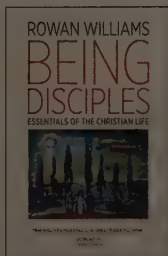
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stuffed upholstery, the way a woman's breasts pool as she lies on her back, the thrill of a boxing match, a film, a jazz song, a glimpse of two strangers meeting under a street lamp. He made philosophy out of vertigo, voyeurism, shame, sadism, revolution, music, and sex. Lots of sex.

Phenomenologists proved able to "bracket" (*epoché*) interpretation for only so long before pursuing various possible meanings of their exacting descriptions of human being-in-the-world. Husserl gave his thought an inward, idealist cast by treating phenomena as confined to a mental realm. Others pushed phenomenology aggressively outward. Husserl's renegade student Martin Heidegger took an ontological turn, treating phenomenology as a means to address the question of enfolding Being itself. Sartre turned phenomenology in an ethical direction, building on Husserl's concept of "intentionality"—the idea that thinking is always *of* or *about* something—to move toward a radical understanding of human freedom as self-creation in "an indifferent, hostile, resistant

world." If Husserl interpreted intentionality as "an operation that pulled everything back into the mind after all," for Sartre it meant, as he said, "to wrest oneself from moist, gastric intimacy and fly out over there, beyond oneself, to what is not oneself."

This ethically inflected phenomenology informed Sartre's early fiction (*Nausea*) as well as his philosophical masterwork *Being and Nothingness*. It led eventually to the stage of the Club Maintenant in Paris on the evening of October 28, 1945,

Authentic action grows out of a "situated freedom."

where for an overflow crowd he laid out for the first time the essentials of what he had come to call *existentialism*. Like Husserl, he had a slogan for his philosophy: "Existence precedes essence." By this he meant that human beings were peculiar animals, blessed and cursed with the freedom to make of themselves what they will, undetermined by any prior essential selfhood granted them by God or nature. We make ourselves up as we go along. To deny this freedom for self-creation is to act inauthentically and in "bad faith."

Bakewell unpacks Sartre's slogan in characteristically helpful fashion:

As a human I am whatever I choose to make of myself at every moment. I am *free*—and therefore I'm *responsible* for everything I do, a dizzying fact which causes an *anxiety* inseparable from human existence itself. On the other hand, I am only free within *situations*, which can include factors in my own biology and psychology, as well as physical, historical and social variables of the world into which I have been thrown. Despite the limitations, I always want more: I am passionately involved in personal *projects* of all kinds. Human existence is thus *ambiguous*: at once boxed in by borders and yet transcendent and exhilarating. An existentialist who is also *phenomenological* provides no easy rules for dealing with this condition, but instead concentrates on *describing* lived experience as it presents itself. By describing experience well, he or she hopes to understand this existence and awaken us to ways of living more *authentic* lives.

What interests Bakewell most about existentialism is the ambiguity she identifies here, the tension implied by its notion of "situated freedom" between the constraints imposed by the contingencies of our "thrownness" (Heidegger) in the world and our freedom to act in the midst of such contingencies in light of the (often frightening) responsibility we bear for our actions.

Though all those in Sartre's circle in the late 1940s shared this conception of "situated freedom," they held the terms of this formulation in different balance. Sartre, Bakewell demonstrates, minimized the limits imposed by situations—"Everything in him longed to be free of bonds, of impediments and limitations, and viscous clinging things." She illustrates

Read THE COW IS NOW said the child

The cow is now.
Lowling and chewing,
no mewing or bowing to spring
like that upon a rat.
The cow's no cat.
In grass to eat
or stream to drink,
the cow's a statue against the sky.
Her great head still,
her eyes staring at you,
she parks.
A dog remembers you, and barks,
but the vacant-eyed cow is only now
I mean
she lives right now,
she's in it this minute.
She takes a stand,
and wouldn't give a fig
to do a jig.
The cow's no pig.
Yet, some nights after milking,
soon as the sun sinks and the farm sleeps,
in the lull till dawn
she'll yawn, then take a great run
and sail clear over the moon
like a gull over a dune.
How?
Who knows?
She just says, "NOW!"
and goes.

Warren L. Molton

Sartre's desire by way of his debate with Jean Genet over the genetic basis for homosexuality. Sartre would not concede any such innate predisposition. On the other hand, Bakewell finds Camus inclined to undue fatalism (a reading from which I would demur).

Her sympathies lie most with those such as Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty who kept freedom and contingency in balance, particularly the former, who argued in her underappreciated *Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) that "we have to do two near-impossible things at once: understand ourselves as limited by circumstances, and yet continue to pursue our projects as though we are truly in control." This perspective also informed Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), arguably the finest masterwork of existentialism.

Bakewell says Merleau-Ponty would be "an intellectual hero" of her story, as would Beauvoir. She describes the former as "the happy philosopher of things as they are." This is a curious choice for a book devoted to a philosophy of incessant self-

"Who cares about freedom, bad faith, and authenticity today?"

creation and re-creation. It seems to me an unsettling characterization of the author of *Humanism and Terror* (1947), an unabashed apology for Stalin that Bakewell slides over all too quickly. Beauvoir, Bakewell's other hero, is a more apt choice. Her four-volume autobiography provides Bakewell with a model of the "inhabited philosophy" that she attempts to write, and she draws heavily upon it for evidence and inspiration.

Bakewell is more circumspect in her estimate of her "giants." She owns up to her attraction to Heidegger's thinking, but in the end she finds him repellant. Not only, of course, for his unapologetic Nazism and the fascist dog whistles in *Being and Time*, but also for the mystagogy of his late work, with its insistence on a retreat to a passive waiting for the unveiling of Being and a thoroughgoing indictment of modern technology—the siren call of which she admits to hearing. But, she concludes, "there is something of the grave in this vegetative world." Heidegger's philosophy can be "exhilarating, but in the end it is a philosophy in which I cannot find a place to live."

Her verdict on Sartre is mixed, but on the whole, favorable. "Of course, he was monstrous," she acknowledges. "He was self-indulgent, demanding, bad-tempered. He was a sex addict who didn't even enjoy sex, a man who would walk away from friendships saying he felt no regret. . . . He defended a range of odious regimes, and made a cult of violence." But she says, unlike Heidegger, Sartre was "full of character. He bursts out on all sides with energy, peculiarity, generosity, and communicativeness. . . . He was good—or at least he *wanted* to do good. He was driven to it." Here one might well disagree, but to her credit Bakewell has provided every bit of evidence one would need in order to do so.

"Situated freedom," even of the carefully calibrated sort

defended by Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, was in the eyes of existentialism's critics still too unhinged a conception of human being-in-the-world. Its early adversaries, orthodox Marxists and conservative Catholics, contended not merely for contingency but for irresistible determination, whether material or divine. Later opponents (including structuralists like Claude Lévi-Strauss, proponents of the *nouveau roman* like Alain Robbe-Grillet, and poststructuralists like Jean Baudrillard) thought the existentialists gave too much credence to humans as agents in the world. They dismissed existentialism as an unfortunate humanist hangover. They "turned philosophy back into an abstract landscape," Bakewell complains, "stripped of the active, impassioned beings who occupied it in the existential era."

Intellectual history at its best sends readers back to the original sources, and Bakewell excels at this. *How to Live* sent its readers in search of Montaigne's essays. *At the Existentialist Café* should move readers to pull yellowing paperbacks of *Nausea*, *The Stranger*, and *The Second Sex* off of used bookstore shelves. Some might even wade into *Being and Time* and *Being and Nothingness*. Their debt to Bakewell will thereby deepen, for all these books and others she introduces remain, in every respect, stirring.

"Who cares about freedom, bad faith, and authenticity today?" the snarky Baudrillard asked contemptuously in 2001 in an obituary for existentialism. Many still do, thank God. **CC**

Make me plow blade

Make me plow blade, implement
for the deep earth, forge me blue
with heat, Lord of flame, blow
strong the bellows, let the bellows
sing, baptize me in song, let ring

anvil, hammer, iron, tong, away
the slag, away the dull, draw me
sharp as the chine of a scythe,
sharp as sun glint, sharp as steel,
Lord of moldboard, coulter, land-

side, heel, temper me raw in water
and salt, mark me with ash, bathe
me in flux, teach me syntax of edge
and point, syntax of furrow, syntax
of stone, Lord of harvest, fit me

to rend, fit my tongue to till, oh be
not done till the yoke holds fast,
the share proves keen, oh be not
done till the ground gives way, oh
Shaper of earth, of blade, of song

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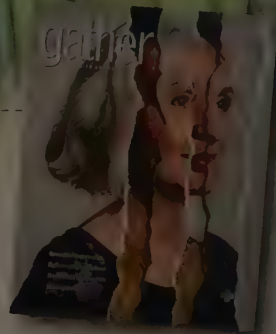
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by Stephanie Paulsell

Awake and watching

THIS YEAR Advent finds me already waiting. Like many others, I am waiting to see who the new president-elect will appoint to key positions; waiting to see what the new government will look like; waiting to see if he will build a wall, ban Muslims from the country, or bring back manufacturing jobs. No matter how we voted, we're all waiting anxiously to see if Donald Trump will keep his campaign promises.

As I tune restlessly in and out of the news, refreshing my feed for the latest analysis, Advent arrives bearing its radical promise. The prayers and hymns and readings of this season remind me that we're not just waiting for a president to assemble a government. We're waiting for the eternal to break into time. We're waiting for Christ to be born in the world once more. We're waiting for God.

Advent began this year, as it always does, with the prophets proclaiming the fundamental religious message: wake up. I feel them pull at my attention as I fret and worry. Now is the moment to wake from sleep, they call. Shake yourself from the dust and listen. Rise up, for everything is about to change.

These words resonate both with those who despair over the new presidency and those who greet it with excitement. The prophets, however, speak from a position outside the seat of power. Whether our candidate wins or loses, we always need to wake up, to listen to prophetic voices cutting through power's glamour and seductions.

One of those seductions will be the tendency to downplay the rhetoric of Donald Trump's campaign. It was only strategically hateful, we are already being told. But Trump widened dangerous paths when he appealed to white nationalism and blamed our nation's problems on refugees and immigrants. These are old paths, and we know where they lead. Stay awake, the prophets insist. Stay focused.

Martin Luther King Jr. once called our failure to remain awake during periods of social change "one of the great liabilities of history." Advent offers an opportunity to all of us to cultivate a wakefulness with the power to shape the future.

We are called to wake up but also to watch. Watching is an active, layered kind of wakefulness, a way of waiting and seeking at once. We are to watch what is inside of us and outside of us, to watch the signs of the times and to extend our watching beyond our time toward the day when swords are beaten into plowshares, the poor satisfied, and the powerless strengthened, the day when all peoples gather at the Lord's banquet and all tears are wiped away. Advent trains us to keep our eyes on the horizon and let what we see in the distance shape how we respond to what we see up close. This takes practice.

We might begin with how we speak to one another. The hateful, pinched language of the campaign has had real and damaging consequences. What would happen if all of us were convinced that language that is honest, creative, and full of possibility, born both of what we see and what we hope for, could also have consequences? Would we imagine new forms of living that are spacious and inclusive? Would we cultivate new courage to resist what is not?

Advent calls us to prepare a way within us and in the world around us to receive the Christ-child. We remember him as a baby born in a stable because his laboring mother was turned away from safe shelter. We remember him as a refugee whose parents crossed the border into Egypt to protect him from violence. To prepare a way for Jesus is to create safe places for him to live, to protect him from the violence that threatens him.

In every Advent, we have the chance to reflect on our lives and commitments.

The baby for whom we wait this Advent bears his good news into the world even before he can speak. We hear it in the lengths his parents went to protect him, the miles the Magi traveled to honor him, the awe of the shepherds who heard his birth announced by an angel, the assurance of the angel that this was good news for all people.

These are stories of reverent attention to the divine presence that is shining on the margins. Advent illuminates the Christ Child's face at borders where refugees seek safe passage, in rural and urban places of poverty and despair, in prisons, in communities that have been demeaned and scapegoated, and those that have borne the brunt of white supremacist ideologies since our nation's founding.

In every Advent there is much at stake. We have an opportunity to enter a new year awake and alive to the presence of God in our midst, a chance to recalibrate our lives and our commitments in the light of God's vision. It is one of the greatest blessings of our faith that God seems never to tire of inviting us to begin again.

Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Stephanie Paulsell teaches at Harvard Divinity School.

IN Review

Listening to Louisiana

by Anthony B. Robinson

Can a self-described progressive from Berkeley understand and even empathize with Tea Party supporters in the Deep South? Is it possible for any of us to connect across the huge political fault lines in American society? For Arlie Russell Hochschild, an academic sociologist, these are not academic questions. They are as real as the next family reunion. Bringing the extended family together for the holidays can mean confronting America's political divide over the dinner table.

Our often conflicted efforts to comprehend those on the other side of the divide was exponentially increased by this year's presidential election. Often I heard people in my blue bubble of Seattle ask, "Do you actually *know* any Trump supporters?" (as if inquiring about a tribe somewhere deep beyond contact in the Amazon). "I just don't get it—what can they be thinking?" Reading this book might have helped them.

Hochschild, whose previous work focused mainly on the family and the changing role of women, sets out to understand people on the other side of "our political divide." And she sets out literally, traveling ten times over five years to Louisiana, where she embeds herself among government-hating Tea Party supporters.

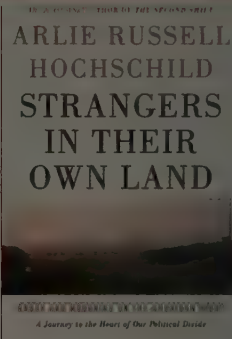
The region of Louisiana that Hochschild studies is an epicenter of big oil and gas—and of devastating environmental impacts caused by those industries. There on the bayous she tries to comprehend "the great paradox." How can people who have seen their beloved wetlands turned into toxic dumps nevertheless oppose the federal government, the EPA, and regulation designed to stop pollution or get things cleaned up? These

people mourn the loss of clean water, the destruction of fish and wildlife, and the death of family members due to epidemic levels of cancer. Yet they support politicians who want the federal government out of their lives. What gives?

Hochschild is resolved to do more than point out the paradox or judge those who embody it. She wants to climb "the empathy wall" in order to see the world through the eyes and experiences of her subjects. This means spending time in people's homes, on their land and waters, in their churches, and at their family and civic gatherings. Hochschild often has to check her own biases as she works to gain trust and listen deeply. As she does, she finds herself interested not just in the facts but in feelings. How do the people she comes to know in the Louisiana bayous *feel* about themselves, their culture, and their country?

They feel confused and betrayed, because the rules of how the world is supposed to operate have changed. The narrative through which they've made sense of life no longer seems to apply. Worse, that narrative itself is discounted, even disparaged, by much of contemporary American society and its elite.

What is that narrative? The "deep story" Hochschild identifies is about patience, hard work, putting up with pain and difficulty, being optimistic, and being committed to family and faith. It is a story about standing in a long line that, eventually, will lead to realizing the American dream of prosperity and security. The people in line are prepared to wait patiently, doing what they've been told they should in order to realize the dream. They hate the way so many people claim to be victims. They don't believe in whining. Life is tough; suck it up.



**Strangers in Their Own Land:
Anger and Mourning on
the American Right**
By Arlie Russell Hochschild
The New Press, 368 pp., \$27.95

But the line is no longer moving forward. It's stuck, or even moving in the wrong direction. Jobs have disappeared. Wages have stagnated. Most frustrating of all, people are cutting in line. And here's the clincher: the government is helping them do it. Immigrants, refugees, black people, Hispanics, and some women are getting ahead, while they—who have played by the rules—aren't. Even some forms of wildlife, like the brown pelican, gets a place up ahead in the line!

When the narrative collapses, explains Hochschild, "you are a stranger in your own land."

You do not recognize yourself in how others see you. It is a struggle to feel seen and honored. And to feel honored you have to feel—and feel seen as—moving forward. But through no fault of your own, and in ways that are hidden, you are slipping backward.

Larger shifts are at work here. Globalization has meant progress in the fight against poverty worldwide, but with a downside for at least some American workers. The move from an economy based on extraction of natural resources

Anthony B. Robinson is a United Church of Christ minister and the author of many books on church life and leadership, including *Changing the Conversation: A Third Way for Congregations* (Eerdmans).

(logging, mining, fishing) to a service economy means fewer jobs for those who do hard physical work and more jobs for “knowledge workers.” Amid these seismic shifts, there are others: America is moving steadily toward being a society where people of color are the majority. And Protestant Christians, once the dominant majority, are already a minority.

As Hochschild was concluding her work in Louisiana, Donald Trump emerged on the scene like a flame to dry kindling. She explains:

Since 1980, virtually all those I talked with felt on shaky economic ground, a fact that made them brace at the very idea of “redistribution.” They also felt culturally marginalized; their views about abortion, gay marriage, gender roles, race, guns, and the Confederate flag all were held up to ridicule in the national media as backward. And they felt part of a demographic decline.

One of her subjects summed it up this way: “there are fewer and fewer white Christians like us.”

It’s easy to dismiss those who hold such views as racist, backward, and benighted—which is exactly how Hochschild’s subjects feel they are viewed by the larger culture and its elites. This sense of marginalization makes them

vulnerable to the seductions of political figures who declare that the government is the enemy, that free-market capitalism is their best hope, and that it’s time to “make America great again.”

Denigrating such people, as Hillary Clinton did in her infamous “basket of deplorables” remarks, while politically easy and psychically gratifying, is asking for trouble. Moreover, it’s blaming the victim. For even if Hochschild’s subjects hate the idea of being thought of as victims, they are. They are victims of social and demographic changes, and more insidiously, victims of the manipulations of very wealthy conservatives like the Koch brothers. The Kochs and those like them have been masterful at exploiting the fears and frustrations of the kinds of people Hochschild befriended.

These days, progressives are often urged to make friends across racial and ethnic lines as a part of the work of understanding white privilege and dismantling systemic racism. Perhaps friendships need to be pursued on other fronts as well. How about an effort to make friends among those on the other side of the political divide, among those who you may be tempted to dismiss or to write off as backward and deplorable? Jesus, after all, did not come to save the righteous but sinners—another word, one might say, for deplorables. Moreover, it is a category that includes us all.



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Youngblood: A Novel

By Matt Gallagher

Simon & Schuster, 352 pp., \$26.00

War Is Beautiful: The New York Times Pictorial Guide to the Glamour of Armed Conflict

By David Shields

powerHouse Books, 112 pp., \$39.95

What does a book thoroughly of its moment look like? It looks a lot like Matt Gallagher's war novel.

And what does the world of the moment look like? Well, for one thing, it's shrinking. Iraq is now on the "edge of empire," in this case, the American empire. A suspected bomb on the road is "an unspooled cassette tape of Bon Jovi's 'Slippery When Wet.'" A teenage Iraqi shepherd boy wears "a Guns N' Roses concert tee."

Other realities of a changing and contracting world are also on full display. It

is no longer cool to make jokes about gay people in the military. That favorite millennial word *awesome* makes an appearance. Tanks now have iPod docks. Americans based in Iraq use Skype to keep in touch, and argue, with family back home. The narrator describes this scene at a military base: "Stumbling out of the cybercafé, I passed a joe Skyping with a khol-eyed goth lady holding a toddler. The two adults were laughing together at the child's burps."

Any good war novel is part of a long literary tradition that began with Homer and continued in this country with Stephen Crane, Ernest Hemingway, Joseph Heller, Michael Herr, and Tim O'Brien. Gallagher includes many of the well-known tropes of war literature: graphic depictions of battle; characters pondering questions of honor, duty, and courage; absurd bureaucratic entanglements; the realization (acute since the Vietnam War) that missions that lead American soldiers to faraway lands are never as simple as civilian leaders say they are.

Youngblood has a meandering plot—but what novel that depicts war doesn't? In broad outline, it's the first-person account of Lieutenant Jack Porter, who is serving just as the United States is about to scale down its military footprint in Iraq. Porter must deal with a hardened and troublesome sergeant who is assigned to his platoon. He shares a loving but turbulent relationship with a war-hero brother who is now back in the United States facing his own scars and traumas from war.

And he has the day-to-day worries of an officer who tries his best to play by the rules and work within the boundaries set by the military and his own conscience. Porter, strikingly comfortable with ambiguity, hears out a commander who reminds him that counterinsurgency "is a complicated task. A thinking man's war. Requires care, restraint. An appreciation for the gray." Porter responds: "Sir, I am all about the gray."

Gallagher is a former U.S. Army captain who has also written an acclaimed memoir based on his time in Iraq. The publisher states that *Youngblood* is "the only Iraq novel set entirely during the war's contradictory, tentative and unresolved final chapter," and that this unique focus "truly distinguishes Gallagher's novel from those of his contemporaries."

Having read some of the other recent war literature penned by young Americans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan, I am not convinced that this is an important claim. If any of the war literature being written now is read a hundred years from now—and I think there is a good chance it will be—I doubt that the timeline of its setting will be crucial.

What could distinguish Gallagher's work, however, is the way in which it presents Iraqis and others who serve with the Americans or encounter them in the strained context of "nation-building" (which often involves handing over bundles of U.S. cash to local sheiks) as fully formed, or nearly fully formed, characters. Readers get to know several non-American characters (like a young trans-

Reviewed by Chris Herlinger, international correspondent for National Catholic Reporter's Global Sisters Report.



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Real

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ate a Cotton Belt Baptist's supplication for their son. It probably didn't matter."

At times the prose is overpolished and overburnished. But Gallagher is a gifted writer who gets most things right. Anyone who has experienced the deserts of the Middle East will immediately understand, even feel and smell, descriptions like this one: "The young day was already overcooked and smelled of sand and canal water."

The aesthetics of Gallagher's prose prompt an ethical question: Is an aesthetic posture appropriate for war? In reflecting on images, David Shields does not think so. His strange, troubling, and useful photographic volume demonstrates how images undergird thinking about (and even support for) the post-9/11 U.S. wars.

A longtime reader of the *New York Times*, Shields found that his attraction to the newspaper's front-page war photos had become "a mixture of rapture, bafflement, and repulsion." He came to

believe that the *Times*' photos "glorified war through an unrelenting parade of beautiful images whose function is to sanctify the accompanying descriptions of battle, death, destruction, and displacement."

Collecting many of these striking images into a volume that he calls a witness "to a graveyard of horrendous beauty," Shields claims that the *New York Times* uses "its front-page war photographs to convey that a chaotic world is ultimately under control, encased within amber. In doing so, the paper of record promotes its institutional power as protector/curator of death-dealing democracy." Arguing that all Americans are culpable for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Shields locates a collective psyche and memory "inscribed in these photographs." Behind "these sublime, destructive, illuminated images are hundreds of thousands of unobserved, anonymous war deaths."

Shields may well be right in some cases.

But his provocative argument comes at a time when the idea of the front page is itself something of an anachronism—replaced by constant video streaming and images on our smartphones. He gives too much power to the *Times* and its front pages in a moment when traditional media have become, like so much else in society, loosened from their onetime institutional authority.

Longtime critics of the *Times* like Noam Chomsky have praised Shields's book. I find the ordering of photos into specific themes—Father, God, Pietà, beauty, love, death—to be overly clever and mannered, pounding the thesis into the ground. And from my journalist's eye, I regard most of the chilling photographs not as glorifications of war but as the work of courageous humanistic witnesses to the horrors of war in the tradition of Goya and Robert Capa.

This capacity for witness may be the strength of Shields's work. Those who wish to discuss war and peace with depth, empathy, and concrete representation could well use this book as a starting point for debate and reflection.

But then again, they could also reach for their smartphones. Or they could pick up Gallagher's novel.

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Here I Am: A Novel

By Jonathan Safran Foer
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 592 pp., \$28.00

In a rare moment of vulnerability with his teenage son Sam, Jacob describes the time when his wife, Julia, corrected him for singing the wrong lyric to a Nirvana song:

"She pointed out that you were wrong?"

"Yeah."

"That's so Mom."

"I was grateful."

"But you were singing."

"Singing wrongly."

"Still. She should have let it go."

"No, she did the right thing."

Jacob explains that the lyric, which he had always sung as "I can see from shame" was actually "aqua seafoam shame." Sam responds with puzzlement: "What's that even supposed to mean?" "It doesn't mean anything," Jacob replies. "That was my mistake. I thought it had to mean something."

What Jacob doesn't tell Sam is that Julia's correction of Jacob occurred while they were in bed together, naked and stoned, after promising each other to be fully honest and withhold nothing—a conversation that culminated for Julia in thrilling sexual gratification resulting solely from the exchange of words. But from that moment on, words began to fail, and the marriage began a slow decline.

Words carry tremendous power. This is why Julia felt it necessary to correct Jacob's mistaken version of the lyric. It's why the novel begins with a rabbi threatening to cancel Sam's bar mitzvah after finding a list of explicit racial epithets on his desk at Hebrew school. It's why Jacob and Julia's marriage is undone by the discovery of a secret cell phone filled with sexually explicit text messages. It's why the comments of world leaders following a catastrophic earthquake in Israel lead to unlikely alliances—Kosovo, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, the Islamic State, and Hezbollah find them-

selves on the same side as a world war looms.

And it's why the bat mitzvah sermon of Samanta, Sam's computer-generated version of himself, might be read as a hermeneutical key to the characters' deepest struggles. The assigned Torah portion for Samanta's bat mitzvah includes Genesis 22, and her *d'var* begins with Abraham's inner conflict as he answers "here I am" to both God and Isaac while

knowing he can be loyal to only one of them:

When God asks for Abraham, Abraham is wholly present for God. When Isaac asks for Abraham, Abraham is wholly present for his son. But how can that be possible? God is asking Abraham to kill Isaac, and Isaac is asking his father to protect him. How can Abraham be two directly opposing things at once?

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Reviewed by Elizabeth Palmer.

In good Jewish exegetical tradition, Samanta doesn't attempt to answer every question she raises. The meaning of "here I am" is never fully reconciled—either for Abraham in the biblical story or for the novel's characters as they struggle to be present with one another across shifting loyalties. Yet, there's power in the way Samanta names the issues at stake: "My bat mitzvah portion is about many things, but I think it is primarily about who we are wholly there for, and how that, more than anything else, defines our identity."

The *d'var* ends with a scathing indictment of Samanta's family (which is, of course, Sam's family) for all the ways they fail to be present to one another.

My great-grandfather, who I mentioned before, has asked for help. He doesn't want to go to the Jewish Home. But nobody in the family has responded by saying, "Here I am." Instead, they have tried to convince him that he doesn't know what is best. . . . I was accused of having used some bad language in Hebrew school this morning. When my parents showed up to speak with Rabbi Singer, they didn't tell me, "Here we are." They asked, "What did you do?" I wish I had been given the benefit of the doubt.

Samanta ends her speech, warns her guests to leave the synagogue, and blows it up. Not because she's the virtual creation of an angry 13-year-old boy, but because "he built the synagogue with the hope of feeling, finally, comfortable somewhere" and "if it wasn't exactly

right, it was completely and irretrievably wrong." He blew it up in order to re-create it.

The line between real life and the virtual world may be fuzzy to a teenage boy addicted to his iPad, but Sam is well aware that real life doesn't offer the chance to re-create what is broken. The fate of his great-grandfather unfolds slowly, although the Holocaust survivor's dilemma is articulated in the novel's first sentence: "When the destruction of Israel commenced, Isaac Bloch was weighing whether to kill himself or move to the Jewish Home." Sam's relationship with his parents is damaged by their response to his alleged writing of racial epithets, but it's far more damaged by the circumstances around the fracturing of their marriage (of which he is, unbeknownst to them, appallingly aware).

Sam's real bar mitzvah speech is less eloquent than his virtual one, but it too offers insight into the novel's underlying questions. He tells of a classroom discussion of Hamlet's "to be or not to be" speech in which a student asks, "Isn't there another option besides those two? Like, to mostly be or mostly not be, that is the question." Sam continues, "And that got me thinking that also maybe one doesn't have to exactly choose. 'To be or not to be. That is the question.' To be and not to be. That is the answer."

Does Sam's answer express fatalistic resignation? Or is it hopeful? In either case, it describes what most of the characters in the book are doing most of the time. Among words wisely spoken and mistakenly unspoken, in the space between meaning and meaninglessness, as a marriage falls apart alongside an unfolding exaggerated crisis in the Middle East, the characters both are and are not present to one another. It seems that this is the best they can do, and there is some tenderness in their recognition of their limitations.

Foer's novel takes on a lot. It's a portrait of domestic life, a fanciful geopolitical fable, a cautionary tale about intimacy and estrangement, a comedic portrayal of Jewish life, and a study in things falling apart. It's well written enough that it would be entertaining even if, like the words of the Nirvana song, it didn't have

any deeper meaning beyond the play of words on a page. (The scene where Jacob fakes a cough in order to peek surreptitiously over the urinal divider in the airport restroom where he finds himself standing next to Steven Spielberg is classic Foer humor—"Coughing and turning one's head had something to do with genitals. The logic wasn't airtight, but it felt right. Jacob coughed and snuck a peek"—as is the surprising discovery Jacob makes when he looks.)

Humor and plot aside, the narrative hints at the ethical questions that face all of us as we seek to be fully present to God and one another in a fragile world.

Reading and Writing Cancer: How Words Heal

By Susan Gubar
Norton, 240 pp., \$26.95

After rejecting "on quirky, not rational, grounds" several alternative forms of treatment for the suffering that accompanies chemotherapy, Susan Gubar discovered the therapeutic potential of writing about her cancer. "At the worst times," she observes, "writing helps us remember" and can lead to "reconstitution of the self."

The activity helps writers discover meaning, clarify ideas, and keep track of details. It can, at times, liberate and empower cancer survivors by distancing them from the disease. Writing is as "uplifting and inspiring for me as meditation is for others: a way of steadying myself, gaining perspective, quieting anxieties, and shifting my attention from my ailing body to words, to sentences, and (best of all) to the experiences of other people."

Gubar's own writing led her to explore the work of other cancer survivors: accordingly, her book surveys a wide range of voices, genres, and approaches. Gubar's primary aim is to encourage people with cancer to write, and she offers practical advice for doing

Reviewed by Karen Saupe, who teaches English literature and directs the Rhetoric Center at Calvin College.

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so. She also introduces readers to published works that “instruct us on the physical, mental, emotional, social, and economic repercussions of various cancers and treatments” in order to “discover multiple ways to live with the disease.” Her discussion of these works provides a powerful overview of the emotional and ethical complexities of cancer and its treatment.

Each individual’s experience of cancer is unique and may shift from moment to moment. Gubar writes as a frustrated patient, then a passionate advocate, then a gentle teacher, then a rigorous scholar. She can be in turn angry, funny, compassionate, or indignant. Some sections of the book function as catalogues, with reviews and close readings; others serve as a guide for inexperienced writers. Gubar shares a few personal stories to invite familiarity, but she is primarily a gracious host who introduces readers to other voices. She intentionally avoids creating an “advice manual” for coping with cancer; she offers possibilities rather than prescriptions.

Her practical suggestions for overcoming writing anxiety include a long list of prompts to help generate ideas: “Remember the moment of diagnosis or of telling a sibling about it”; “celebrate or castigate a doctor or nurse”; “In my most snarky mood, I attribute the cause of my disease to...”; “I am not yet ready to confront...”; She mentions her own experiment writing an “Obituary,” an obituary with a second layer of candid commentary about its content.

She celebrates the privacy of diaries and unsent letters but also addresses issues that emerge when one writes for a public audience. As a blogger for the *New York Times*, Gubar has struggled with the “audience effect,” the tendency to self-censor in anticipation of readers’ comments. Her chapter on blogging is perhaps the most self-revelatory section of the book.

If writing is therapeutic, so too is reading. Gubar quotes C. S. Lewis: “We read to know we are not alone.” She asserts that “reading the vibrant works of others eases the anxiety of cancer and clarifies what we are going through individually.” Gubar cites dozens of authors and reveals a surprisingly rich emerging

canon of cancer art. She describes memoirs (by, for example, Barbara Creaturo of *Cosmopolitan*, author Reynolds Price, physician Edward Rosenbaum, actor Evan Handler, and comedian Gilda Radner); works of fiction (by Tolstoy, Tillie Olsen, Lorrie Moore, and J. M. Coetzee); and hybrid works (including David Small’s *Stitches* and Terry Tempest Williams’s *Refuge*). These works reveal recurring themes: “fury at the medical establishment,” personal fear, defiance, and the liberty to take risks.

She shares a “patchwork” poem she has composed using lines from several other poems. The resulting chorus of voices and images reinforces the complexity of Gubar’s project and the experiences it seeks to honor. She includes visual art and graphic novels (a series of paintings called *Hollis Sigler’s Breast Cancer Journal*; David Jay’s photographs in *The SCAR Project*, and Robert Pope’s paintings superimposing Christian iconography on images of bedridden hospital patients). Gubar often juxtaposes radically different responses or interpretations, but always with respect and dignity.

Through her exploration of many of these works, Gubar raises ethical and social questions. Christian Wiman’s *My Bright Abyss* is one of the few works in which she explicitly identifies the role of religious faith and doubt. She quotes Wiman: “The god that comes at such moments may not be simple at all, arises out of and includes the very abyss that man would flee.” Wiman’s faith, Gubar observes, reflects his identification with the crucifixion rather than the resurrection. She explains that compassion is crucial to Wiman’s understanding of God and human relationships.

In fact, the greatest value in Gubar’s book may be its ability to invite compassion. Cancer survivors will undoubtedly find affirmation here. Those experiencing cancer secondhand will encounter some of the questions, sufferings, complaints, and victories their loved ones face. Individuals with no firsthand experience of cancer may benefit the most as they begin to consider the complex range of responses to pain, suffering, and treatment. All of these readers will know that they are not alone.

BookMarks

The Word Detective: Searching for the Meaning of It All at the Oxford English Dictionary

By John Simpson
Basic Books, 384 pp., \$27.99

This fascinating memoir about the editing, updating, and online debut of the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives a glimpse into what the author portrays as a living, breathing book. John Simpson, who worked at the estimable dictionary for most of his adult life, intersperses the story of his own life and vocation with stories of words. Along the way there’s drama, sadness, and a good deal of dry humor. “The English are temperamentally obsessed with the presence or absence of apostrophes. It remains for many people a divide between civilization and chaos.” Simpson covers the history of words that are fraught with meaning in today’s world—*gay*, *disability*, and *sorry*—as well as more mundane terms like *selfie*, *juggernaut*, and *balderdash*.

Eucharistic Prayers

By Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher
Eerdmans, 365 pp., \$40.00

This book will be refreshing for those who lead lectionary-based worship with Holy Communion and don’t feel bound to denominational resources. Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher offer eucharistic prayers tied to the Revised Common Lectionary texts for every Sunday in the three-year cycle, as well as feast days and other occasions for communal worship like marriage and Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Even worship leaders who don’t use full eucharistic prayers will find here evocative images of salvation history, like this one from the prayer for Advent 4, Year A: “Fearless God, who came in a dream to Joseph, dream through us anew today. Speak into our places of fear. Transcend and transform all that keeps us from living your dream.”

Wizards in New York

The first in a series of five promised films that will add to J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter world, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* begins with a game of hide and seek that grows into an epic battle. Produced and written by Rowling, the film is set in New York City during the Jazz Age, between the great wars of the 20th century, and plays on themes familiar to Harry Potter fans: the fear of difference and the repression of free expression.

When British magizoologist Newt Scamander arrives in New York with a battered suitcase chockful of illegal magical creatures, he accidentally switches bags with a baker named Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler) and magical mayhem ensues. Newt, played by Eddie Redmayne, is an animal lover who wants to show his fellow wizards the beauty of creatures they disdain. He leads the hunt for his missing creatures with a charge "to recapture my creatures before they get hurt. They're currently in alien terrain surrounded by millions of the most vicious creatures on the planet: humans."

Newt and friends chase down a niffler, a cute creature with an affection for shiny things that leads it to crash into a jewelry store. There's a giant rhinoceros-like animal that glows because it is in heat and goes crashing through the zoo, and a brightly colored, winged snake that expands and contracts. The creatures and their magical exploits represent the best of what computers can do with special effects—all the creatures are attractive in their own fantastic right.

But these are not effects for their own sake; they serve the plot and the characters. Rowling has shown that she can craft a beginning for a story that will lead to layers of depth and create relation-

ships between the characters with plenty of room for development.

Fear is brewing in the city as something destructive and unexplainable wreaks havoc, and that fear is personified in Mary Lou Barebone (Samantha Morton), the leader of the New Salem Philanthropic Society. Her children's names evoke Puritan virtues; daughter Modesty sings a playground chant about killing witches. While there's nothing explicitly religious in the film, the imagery and the language suggest that these new witch hunters are kin to religious zealots. They are Puritans reduced to the puritanical.

Newt's new friend Tina works for a magical government agency, the Magical Congress of the United States of America, which is anxious to keep the wizarding world secret. This concern for secrecy is the basis for draconian American laws against keeping magical creatures and

against friendships between wizards and ordinary people. (The parallel with Prohibition, as with Puritanism, is just beneath the surface.) When Tina learns about Newt's escaped creatures and his camaraderie with the nonmagical Kowalski, the stage is set for the game of magical hide-and-seek to become something more.

Rowling has rightly diagnosed a world in which rising fear can lead to the demonization of others. But with its anti-Puritan subtext, Rowling is in danger of giving us a simple plea for tolerance with bad guys as repressive religious characters. In her Harry Potter books, Rowling managed to intertwine a cosmic battle between good and evil with everyday human relationships. We can hope that in the new series she'll honor the complexity of American religious history and not simply create a parody of it.



MAGIC IN AMERICA: Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) carries a suitcase of phantasmagoric creatures.

The author is Beth Felker Jones, who teaches theology at Wheaton College.

by Philip Jenkins

notes from the GLOBAL CHURCH

The election of Sadiq Khan as mayor of London created a sensation. A faithful Muslim and the son of humble Pakistani immigrants, Khan received the support of a great many non-Muslim voters, making his election a landmark in European ethnic and religious history. It is quite possible that he might in the future rise to national leadership.

Commentators on the mayoral election often suggested that such interfaith tolerance would never be manifested in Islamic countries. But such pessimists are wrong.

The world's largest Islamic nation is Indonesia, where Muslims represent a large majority of a population of some 250 million. Christians make up about 10 percent of that number, and relations between the two faiths have on occasion been rocky. Matters reached their worst in the late 1990s, a time of economic crisis and the collapse of the long-standing military dictatorship. During the chaos, Christian minorities in regions like Sulawesi were subjected to ethnic cleansing and Chinese Christians in major cities were targeted for violence and mass rape.

In large part, these crimes resulted from economic grievances—Chinese merchants were targeted as scapegoats. Active Islamist terror movements also appeared, with ties to al-Qaeda. For some years, Indonesia seemed to epitomize Muslim-Christian tensions at their most alarming.

Jakarta's Christian governor

Subsequently, conditions have improved enormously, or rather, reverted to traditional norms of tolerance. Although Christians must be very cautious about any attempts at evangelism, congregations worship openly, and Indonesia is now home to some spectacular megachurches.

The most encouraging manifestation of improved attitudes is Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who is commonly known by his Chinese nickname, Ahok. Since 2014, Ahok has been governor of the nation's capital, Jakarta, a city with a population of 10 million, with some 30 million in the larger metropolitan region.

As his name suggests, Ahok is of Chinese origin, and his father came from Guangzhou. Like many Indonesian Chinese, this very powerful leader in a mainly Islamic society is also a Protestant, whose wife bears the distinctively Christian name of Veronica.

Ahok began his career as a mining engineer. He entered politics in 2005 and earned a reputation for his legendary intolerance of corruption. YouTube viewers particularly relished a bracing film of him denouncing venal civil servants in language not often heard in polite Javanese society. He is variously described as tough, combative, and downright rude and is not known to suffer fools. In 2012, Ahok became the running

mate of a Muslim leader, Joko Widodo, for the governorship of Jakarta. When "Jokowi" became Indonesia's president in 2014, his Christian deputy succeeded him in Jakarta.

The religious element may seem surprising. Under Dutch colonial rule, the lands that became Indonesia were critical to Islamic religious and cultural revival worldwide, and the country became home to some very large mass movements. The Nadhlatul Ulama (NU) claims an astonishing 40 million members, and another group, the Muhammadiyah, has a 30 million. These very powerful groups are socially conservative and deeply involved in politics, but they are utterly different from the intolerant Muslim organizations so often found in the Middle East.

For many years, NU's president was Abdurrahman Wahid, who also served as the president of Indonesia, and who was genuinely devoted to pluralism, religious tolerance, and interfaith dialogue. Wahid was an early supporter of Ahok and actively campaigned for him in his early elections.

Such attitudes proved critical in 2014, when Islamic fundamentalists bitterly opposed the prospect of a Christian ruling over Muslims. The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) warned Muslims that voting for Basuki Purnama

would be sinful, and false rumors even charged that Jokowi himself was a crypto-Christian.

Moderate Muslim groups like NU rejected such agitation, urging that candidates should be judged by their honesty and competence rather than religion. Ultimately, even the firebrand leader of FPI made the remarkable concession that "if a non-Muslim leader is elected [democratically] then I will respect and support that as long as the leader is respectful, polite, honest, and is willing to defend the people." By common consent, Ahok has been a successful and popular governor who has struggled heroically to solve Jakarta's overwhelming problems.

Such views have faced severe stress recently. Extremists claim to have found evidence of Ahok uttering anti-Islamic sentiments, provoking mass demonstrations. Hard-line Islamist groups are mobilizing to challenge Ahok in the 2017 gubernatorial elections, albeit through proper democratic activism.

Despite these protests, the fact that Ahok has the position he does is a remarkable tribute to religious attitudes in Indonesia. All in all, the Christian governor of Jakarta would find some interesting things to chat about with the Muslim mayor of London.

Philip Jenkins's Notes from the Global Church appears in every other issue.

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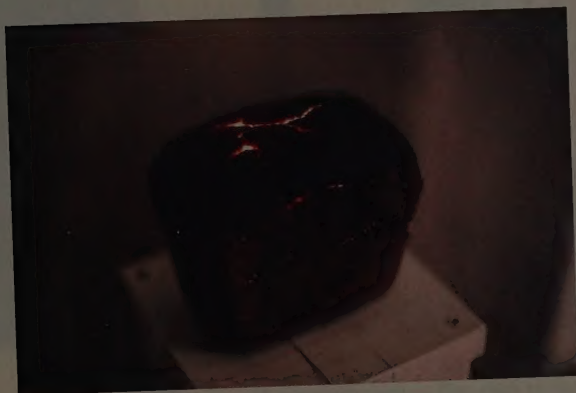
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Angel of Undevastation (top) and Black (bottom), by Paul Solovyev (aka 0x17)

Moscow artist Paul Solovyev, or 0x17, creates art that intentionally throws viewers off balance. His works turn the familiar inside out as the artist considers the nature of belief and the objects used to symbolize belief. "Is it possible," Solovyev asks, "to repeat the phrase 'God is not thrown down' ... in the language of contemporary art and not sink into the territory of didactics and platitude, and make a noncritical, unbiased and positive statement?" Solovyev wrestles with such questions in painting, sculpture, and installations, suggesting that the most important questions are best answered by art itself, as in *Black*, a burned rye loaf that spills out fire.

Art selection and comment by Lil Copan, a painter and editor.

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